



TOWN OF PALM BEACH
Planning, Zoning & Building Department
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PLANNING, ZONING, & BUILDING DEPARTMENT
PZ&B Staff Memorandum: Architectural Commission (ARCOM)

TO: ARCOM Chairperson and Members

FROM: Wayne Bergman, MCP, LEED-AP
Director PZ&B

SUBJECT: ARC-22-187 (ZON-22-129) 441 AUSTRALIAN AVE (COMBO)

MEETING: DECEMBER 16, 2022

ARC-22-187 (ZON-22-129) 441 AUSTRALIAN AVE (COMBO). The applicant, John and Ginny Collett, has filed an application requesting Architectural Commission review and approval for the construction of a new two-story single-family residence with related landscape and hardscape improvements, with variances required on a lot deficient in lot width and lot area in the R-C zoning district and including variance from landscape open space requirements. This is a combination project that shall also be reviewed by Town Council as it pertains to zoning relief/approval.

Applicant: John and Ginny Collett
Professional: McAlpine Tankersley Architecture, PC

THE PROJECT:

The applicant has submitted plans, entitled "A Proposed New Home for 441 Australian Ave", as prepared by **McAlpine Tankersley Architecture, PC** dated October 24, 2022.

The following is the scope of work:

- Construction of a new two-story residence requiring variances.

The following Special Exceptions, Site Plan review and/or Variances required to complete the project, and shall be reviewed by Town Council:

- **VARIANCE 1:** Sec. 134-948(1)a. & Sec. 134-446(b): A variance to develop a residence on a lot with a lot area of 7,000 sq ft where 10,000 sq ft minimum is required in the R-C Zoning District.
- **VARIANCE 2:** Sec. 134-948(2)a. & Sec. 134-446(b): A variance to develop a single-family residence on a lot with a width of 50 ft where 75 ft in width minimum is required in the R-C Zoning District.
- **VARIANCE 3:** Sec. 134-948(11)e.: A variance for a front yard landscaped open space of 38.8% in lieu of the 40% minimum required.

Site Data			
Zoning District	R-C	Lot Size	7,000 SF Required 10,000 SF <i>Variance required</i>
Future Land Use	MULTI FAMILY	Lot Width	50' Required 75' <i>Variance required</i>
Overall Height	Permitted: 26'-6" Proposed: 23'-6"	Lot Coverage	Permitted: 30% (2,100 SF) Existing: 18.5% (1,305 SF) Proposed 29.9% (2,099 SF)
Crown of Road (COR)	1.77' NAVD	Finished Floor Elevation	7.25' NAVD (main) 6.5' NAVD (front cabana)
Max Fill	2.74 7.25 - 1.77 = 5.48 / 2	Site Elevations	Existing: 2' NAVD rear, sides Proposed: 4' NAVD rear, sides
Landscape Open Space	Required: 40% (3,150 SF) Proposed: 45% (3,178 SF)	FEMA Zone	AE 6
Perimeter Open Space	Required: 50% (1,700 SF) Proposed: 81% (2,782 SF)	Front Yard Open Space	Required: 45% (500 SF) Proposed: 38.8% (485 SF) <i>Variance required</i>
Surrounding Properties			
North	1999 Two-story residence		
South	1951 Two-story residence		
East	1974 13-Unit Three-story Condominium— <i>The Australian of Palm Beach</i>		
West	2017 Two-story residence		

STAFF ANALYSIS

This application is presented to the Commission to consider whether all of the criteria in Sec. 18-205 have been met. A review of the project indicates that the application, as proposed, appears to be inconsistent with the abovementioned sections of the Town zoning code.

The subject property is a mid-block parcel zoned R-C. The proposal includes the construction of a new main house and entry cabana—both structures are proposed to be two-stories, with the rear structure—the primary structure—at a higher height. The primary residence is entered through the smaller scaled entry cabana and into an elevated central courtyard. The lot area is 7,000, which is substandard in size for the R-C zoning district that requires 10,000 SF of lot area (variance #1) for development of the site with a single-family residence; additionally, the lot is deficient in lot width (variance #2). The development patterning of the immediate area consists of several multifamily buildings of varying age and architectural styles, heights and densities. Further, there are tow-story single family residences, both older and newer, along the block. Notably, the development of the newer single-family residences are all two-story in height on relatively similar lot sizes to the subject property. In this regard, the granting of the variances as they pertain to the dimensional aspects of the lot—area and width—are not inconsistent with the surrounding area or out of character with the immediate vicinity.

As it pertains to variance #3, to reduce the required amount of front yard open space, some of the green space is lost to the design decision to occupy a motorcourt that is accessed by a single

driveway along the entirety of front yard. This is 'driven' by the programmatic desire to create a large courtyard between the two, two-story structures. The variance request could be further reduced by pushing back parking further into site and reducing the central courtyard between the two buildings and while the proposed drive is located on the property to allow for the existing number of on-street parking spaces to be maintained, the green space can be increased by 15 SF. Staff recommends the design be revised to comply with the front yard open space requirement.

Stylistically, according to the applicant's letter of intent, the new construction builds inspiration from classic Palm Beach Modern and Art Deco structures, as well as materially from wooden bungalows. And the while the design is compatible with scale of the surrounding properties, it does contain many unique architectural features of interest that cannot be found in the immediate area including the materiality of the rough hewn wood cladding painted white, the large ocular windows, the exposed side loaded stair along front structure, the metal clad "eyebrow" along front façade, amongst others.

Of note is the unique sitework, or lack thereof, of the design as it sited on the subject property. Typically, new construction is coupled by sitewide improvements in which the architect proposes elevating the majority of the site with extra 'fill' to increase the overall height or grade of the site in order to address seamlessly transition into required higher finished ground floor elevations. This is often referred to as 'the house on the hill'. An alternate solution is to limit the overall yard elevations and place the structure on a higher building foundation. This solution elevates the structure at the proper and required elevation and designs steps, ramps, tiers, and terraces within the site in order to provide access into the new higher structure. Due to the low-lying nature of this portion of Australian Avenue, the highest crown of road is 1.77' NAVD, the proposed residence at 7.25' NAVD seems extraordinarily high. This is attempted to broken u visually by the front two-story cabana structure which is smaller in width than the principal structure and lower in height.

Approval of the project will require two separate motions to be made by the Commission: (1) for the overall design of the project in accordance with the aforementioned criteria, subject to any imposed conditions, and (2) that the implementation of the proposed variances will/will not cause negative architectural impact to the subject property.

WRB/JGM