



Planning and Zoning Board

Staff Report

CASE NUMBER: ZON18-00687
LOCATION/ADDRESS: Within the 1600 through the 1800 blocks of North Higley Road (east side) and 5200 through the 5300 blocks of East McLellan Road (north side)
GENERAL VICINITY: Located south of McKellips Road on the east side of Higley Road
REQUEST: Rezone to modify an existing PAD and to remove conditions of approval.
PURPOSE: This request will allow an amendment to the existing landscaping requirements
COUNCIL DISTRICT: District 5
OWNER: Multiple owners
APPLICANT: Villas at Alta Mesa Property Owner's Association
STAFF PLANNER: Evan Balmer, AICP

SITE DATA

PARCEL NO.: Multiple parcels
PARCEL SIZE: 21± acres
EXISTING ZONING: RS-6-PAD
GENERAL PLAN CHARACTER: Neighborhood - Suburban
CURRENT LAND USE: Existing Villas at Alta Mesa single-family residential subdivision

SITE CONTEXT

NORTH: Existing multi-family – zoned RM-3
EAST: Existing golf course – zoned RS-7
SOUTH: Existing single-residence – zoned RS-7-PAD
WEST: (Across Higley Road) vacant – zoned LI

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval with conditions.

P&Z BOARD RECOMMENDATION: ☐ Approval with conditions. ☐ Denial

PROPOSITION 207 WAIVER SIGNED: ☐ Yes ☒ No

ZONING HISTORY/RELATED CASES:

June 26, 1979: Annexed into the City of Mesa (Ord. #1250)
December 19, 1983: Rezoned to M-1 (Z83-155)
March 7, 1988: Development master plan for Alta Mesa (Z88-013)
March 26, 1998: Rezoned to R-2-PAD to allow the development of the Villas at Alta Mesa subdivision (Z98-003)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION / REQUEST

The applicant is proposing an amendment to the approved landscape plan for the Villas at Alta Mesa community and removal of three conditions of approval from the original zoning case (Z98-003). The subject property is located on the east side of Higley Road and south of McKellips Road. The Villas at Alta Mesa community is a fully constructed residential community with all required infrastructure supporting the development completed.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARTICIPATION:

The applicant has completed a Citizen Participation Process, which included a mailed letter to property owners within 500' of the site, as well as HOAs and registered neighborhoods within a mile.

The applicant discussed the proposal at the October 9, 2018 and December 11, 2018 HOA Board meetings. These meetings were held at the Legacy Retirement Residence located at 5625 E. McKellips Road, which is within ½ mile of the site. Staff has been contacted by two property owners, who wanted general information about the request.

STAFF ANALYSIS

MESA 2040 GENERAL PLAN:

Staff has reviewed the proposal and found that it is consistent with the criteria for review as outlined in Chapter 15 (15-1) of the Mesa 2040 General Plan. The proposed use of the property also conforms to the General Plan Character designation of Neighborhood-Suburban. Per Chapter 7 of the Mesa 2040 General Plan, the Neighborhood-Suburban character area is primarily single-residence subdivisions, attached or detached, ranging from small-lot to medium density. The primary focus of the neighborhoods character type is to provide safe places for people to live where they can feel secure and enjoy their surrounding community. The proposed project to remove previously approved conditions of approval and modify the associated landscape plan is consistent with surrounding developments, which are single family.

ZONING:

The site is currently zoned RS-6-PAD (Planned Area Development) and the applicant is not proposing to change this designation. However, the request includes the removal of conditions of approval instituted with case Z98-003. Specifically, removing three conditions of approval (i.e condition # 11-13). These conditions relate to landscaping and are specifically listed below:

11. Provide at least one 24" box tree in the front yard of each cluster lot;
12. Retain or plant one row of citrus (24" box) along the McLellan frontage, not in the retention basin;

13. Provide one tree and three shrubs every 25' within the Higley Road right-of-way to be maintained by the homeowner's association;

Because the conditions were adopted through an Ordinance, the removal or modification requires review and approval through the adoption of a new Ordinance. According to the applicant, the request to remove the conditions are necessitated by physical impediments on the lots which makes it impractical to maintain such landscape and trees on the lots. The request to remove the conditions and modify the landscape plan were also as a result of a recommendation by a landscape designer.

The homeowner's association retained a landscape designer to complete a catalogue of the existing landscaping in each front yard and to propose alternatives for the lots that do not currently have a tree in the front yard. The designer found that 20 of the 126 lots in the subdivision did not have a 24" box tree planted in the front yard. Of the 20 lots that were found to be missing trees, the designer recommended planting smaller trees on 11 of the lots, and not planting any trees on the remaining nine lots due to inadequate space for survival of the trees. The results of the Alta Mesa Front Yard Tree Count are included as an attachment to this staff report labeled Exhibit 1.

Conditions of approval number 12 and 13 pertain to perimeter landscaping along McKellips Road and McLellan Road as shown on Exhibit 1. Condition of approval number 12 required one row of citrus to be retained or planted along McLellan Road. While several citrus trees remain along McLellan Road, in the 20 years since the project was originally approved, some of the trees could not survive and were replaced with different species of trees. Condition of approval number 13 required one tree and three shrubs for every 25' to be planted along Higley Road. From the project narrative, since approval of the project, several of the trees planted along Higley Road have been replaced with different species from those approved trees. The planted trees are all now matured. While current perimeter landscaping is inconsistent with the previously approved landscape plan and tree species or the condition of approval, the current landscaping conforms to the landscape pattern and trees along Higley Road frontage and other units in the Alta Mesa community.

PAD OVERLAY MODIFICATIONS – MZO Article 3:

As part of the request to remove the three conditions of approvals, the applicant is proposing to modify the approved landscape plan and replace with a new plan without those required 24" box trees within the front yard of 20 lots. Eleven of these 20 lots will have smaller trees than those approved previously and nine will have no trees in the front yards. According to the applicant, many of the trees planted in the subdivision have not survived due to inadequate land area for the trees to mature. There are also instances where the roots of the trees have damaged hardscape areas on lots, including driveways and sidewalks.

CONCLUSION:

The request complies with the General Plan and meets the review criteria for the Planned Area Development Overlay outlined in Section 11-22-1 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (Section 11-22-1). The proposed changes to the landscape plan are consistent with the surrounding developments in the Alta Mesa area. Staff recommends approval with the following conditions:

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:

1. Compliance with case Z98-003, except as modified by this request.
2. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations.
3. Compliance with the landscape plan dated 11/26/2018.
4. Compliance with Exhibit 1, Villas at Alta Mesa Front Yard Tree Count.

Exhibit 1

Villas at Alta Mesa - Front Yard Tree Count			
Lot Number	Tree in Front	Replacement	Notes:
1	Y		Keep current look
2	Y		Keep current look
3	Y		Keep current look
4	Y		Keep current look
5	Y		Keep current look
6	Y		Keep current look
7	Y		Keep current look
8	Y		Keep current look
9	Y		Keep current look
10	Y		Keep current look
11	Y		Keep current look
12	N	Evergreen Bird	Not big enough for large tree
13	Y		Keep current look
14	Y		Keep current look
15	Y		Keep current look
16	Y		Keep current look
17	Y		Keep current look
18	Y		Keep current look
19	Y		Keep current look
20	Y		Keep current look
21	Y		Keep current look
22	Y		Keep current look
23	Y		Keep current look
24	Y		Keep current look
25	Y		Keep current look
26	Y		Keep current look
27	Y		Keep current look
28	Y		Keep current look
29	Y		Keep current look
30	Y		Keep current look
31	Y		Keep current look
32	Y		Keep current look
33	Y		Keep current look
34	Y		Keep current look
35	Y		Keep current look
36	Y		Keep current look
37	Y		Keep current look
38	Y		Keep current look

39	Y		Keep current look
40	Y		Keep current look
41	Y		Keep current look
42	Y		Keep current look
43	Y		Keep current look
44	Y		Keep current look
45	Y		Keep current look
46	Y		Keep current look
47	Y		Keep current look
48	Y		Keep current look
49	Y		Keep current look
50	Y		Keep current look
51	N	Mastic Tree	Large tree next door, plant tree back along walkway
52	Y		Keep current look
53	Y		Keep current look
54	N	Evergreen Bird	Open spot not big enough for large tree
55	Y		Keep current look
56	Y		Keep current look
57	N	Yellow Bells	Open spot not big enough for tree
58	Y		Keep current look
59	Y		Keep current look
60	N	Nothing	Open spot not big enough for tree/existing hibiscus
61	N	Nothing	No open spots
62	Y		Keep current look
63	Y		Keep current look
64	Y		Keep current look
65	Y		Keep current look
66	Y		Keep current look
67	N	Nothing	Yard too shallow to add tree
68	Y		Keep current look
69	Y		Keep current look
70	Y		Keep current look
71	Y		Keep current look
72	Y		Keep current look
73	N	Nothing	Yard too shallow to add tree
74	N	Nothing	Yard too shallow to add tree
75	Y		Keep current look
76	Y		Keep current look
77	Y		Keep current look
78	Y		Keep current look
79	Y		Keep current look
80	N	Evergreen Bird	Open spot not big enough for large tree

81	Y		Keep current look
82	Y		Keep current look
83	N	Evergreen Bird	Open spot not big enough for large tree
84	Y		Keep current look
85	Y		Keep current look
86	Y		Keep current look
87	Y		Keep current look
88	Y		Keep current look
89	Y		Keep current look
90	Y		Keep current look
91	Y		Keep current look
92	N	Evergreen Bird	Open spot not big enough for large tree
93	Y		Keep current look
94	N	Nothing	Yard too small for tree/ no open spots
95	N	Evergreen Bird	Plant behind existing lady slipper plant
96	Y		Keep current look
97	Y		Keep current look
98	Y		Keep current look
99	Y		Keep current look
100	N	Mastic Tree	Open spot further back along walkway
101	Y		Keep current look
102	N	Mastic Tree	Open spot further back along walkway
103	Y		Keep current look
104	N	Yellow Bells	Large sissoo nearby - add plants only
105	Y		Keep current look
106	Y		Keep current look
107	Y		Keep current look
108	Y		Keep current look
109	Y		Keep current look
110	Y		Keep current look
111	Y		Keep current look
112	N	Nothing	Yard too shallow to add tree
113	Y		Keep current look
114	Y		Keep current look
115	Y		Keep current look
116	Y		Keep current look
117	Y		Keep current look
118	Y		Keep current look
119	N	Nothing	Yard too shallow to add tree
120	Y		Keep current look
121	Y		Keep current look
122	Y		Keep current look

123	Y		Keep current look
124	Y		Keep current look
125	N	Nothing	Open spot not big enough for large tree/garbage path
126	Y		Keep current look