

V487

March 3, 1993

Mr. Glen Hamada
Architects 2, Inc.
1200 College Walk
Honolulu, HI 96817

Dear Mr. Hamada:

Variance Application (V 92-13)
Applicant: Pahoa High School
Request: Proposed Building Height
Tax Map Key: 1-5-3: 38, 39, 45

Pahoa High School through its agent, Architect 2, Inc., requires additional classroom space to accommodate the Puna region's fast growing population. Although the property is 22 acres in area, its configuration is a long triangular shape. Ten classrooms are proposed, and the land area, being limited in buildable space, forces the structure to expand vertically to three stories in order to accommodate those classrooms. As a result, the building must be 44 feet in height rather than the property's RS-10 zoning designation allowance of a 35-foot maximum. It is also more efficient and practical to keep classrooms congregated together wherever possible rather than spread widely.

The School is located in the RS zone partly because the code does not, at this time, contain a designation for public buildings of this sort. As a consequence, any increase in height to accommodate the usual complement of school structures (such as 3-story buildings or auditoriums or gymnasiums) is not permitted without a variance from the residential standards of the Zoning Code.

After reviewing your application and the information submitted on its behalf, the Planning Director by this letter hereby certifies the approval of your variance request to permit this proposed 3-story, 10-classroom school building to be built with a 44-foot height in lieu of the single family residential zoned standard of 35 feet in height.

The approval is based on the following:

MAR 08 1993

Mr. Glen Hamada
March 3, 1993
Page 2

SPECIAL AND UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES

There are special and unusual circumstances applying to the subject real property which exist either to a degree which deprive the owner of substantial property rights that would otherwise be available or to a degree which obviously interfere with the best use or manner of development of that property.

The property is a narrow triangle with classroom buildings concentrated toward its apex. There are only two locations available for new classroom construction, and the proposed site is the most practical and reasonable one, which requires a 3-story building. There is insufficient area for ten classrooms in one or two stories, as they would spread horizontally and occupy more land. Furthermore, the zoning designation, RS-10, contains standards such as the height limit of 35 feet which accommodate residential communities. However, the school complex requires different, greater heights for auditoriums, gymnasiums, stadiums and 3-story buildings which are very common for schools. Therefore, the very practical need for a building height variance, given the physical characteristics of this school properly justify the granting of a variance to permit the 3-story, 44-foot. height being requested.

ALTERNATIVE

There are no reasonable alternatives to this request. Ten classrooms on a single floor or a two story building would require more land than is available. The number of classrooms are necessary to partially relieve the heavily overcrowded conditions of the high school. Utilizing vacant land by the gymnasium would force students to cross Kaoh Road, exposing them to the increasingly heavy vehicular traffic. Furthermore, that land is not owned by the State. The request is reasonable in view of its surroundings which are entirely public school use. There are no conflicts with residential uses; public streets clearly delineate the school property.

INTENT AND PURPOSE

The intent and purpose of the residential zone's building height restriction is to prevent a particular building from overwhelming the locality or neighborhood. In a residential zone, the height limit according to the zoning code, is 35 feet. However, churches, fire stations, and schools are allowed in these areas and they are not incompatible with the surroundings even if their structures are often taller than 35 feet.

Mr. Glen Hamada
March 3, 1993
Page 3

In this case, the high school is an isolated triangular parcel, 22 acres in area bounded entirely by two streets and a baseball field. It therefore stands quite alone, with no dwellings on site. The complex also contains another 45 feet high building, the school gym, which was granted a height variance a few years ago. A functional height of up to 50 feet is common for fire station towers, churches and three (3) story buildings, gyms and auditoriums.

Thus the granting of this variance request does not create a conflict with residential height restrictions. Its purpose furthermore, is considered to be for the public welfare (improving the public high school). No objections were tendered by the general public nor the responding agencies.

Based on the foregoing findings, the variance request would be consistent with the general purpose of the zoning district, the intent and purpose of the Zoning Code and the County General Plan; will not be materially detrimental to the public's welfare; and will not cause substantial adverse impact to the area's character and adjoining properties.

Therefore, the Planning Director has concluded that this request be approved subject to the following conditions:

1. The petitioner, his assigns or successors shall be responsible for complying with all stated conditions of approval.
2. The height of the building shall be permitted to be 44 feet.
3. Off-street parking shall be provided in accordance with plan approval requirements.
4. A building permit for the structure must be secured within three years of the effective date of the variance and construction shall be completed within four years thereafter.
5. All other applicable State and County rules and regulations shall be complied with.
6. Should any of the foregoing conditions not be met, the Director may proceed to declare the variance null and void.

Sincerely,


VIRGINIA GOLDSTEIN
Planning Director

DT:je/mjs/7754D
cc: Pahoah High School
Mr. Herbert Watanabe/Department of Education