



HIGHPOINTE HEMET I LLC
16501 Scientific Way
Irvine, CA 92618

Aster Apartments (SDR 23-001) Variance Request Letter

A) Number and description of the associated application
SDR 23-00: A proposal for a two-phase multifamily development that contains 228 residential units (8 Apartment Buildings), a clubhouse with gym, community spaces, co working, leasing office, swimming pool, play areas, associated parking (uncovered, covered, and garages), landscape open space, dog park, and retention basin on approximately 10.07 acres (2 parcels).

B) Description of proposed variance request
Section 90-386(f)(1)(B) of the Hemet Municipal Code:
Private open space.
Generally. An average of 125 square feet of private open space shall be provided per unit, with a minimum dimension of seven feet. The following minimum private open space shall be provided for each unit type:
One-bedroom or studio: 100 square feet.
Two- or more bedrooms: 150 square feet.

The variance request is to remove the required open space requirement per unit type and to lower the average private open space requirement to 100 sf. The proposed dimensions currently meet the seven-foot requirement.

C) Description of the unique physical circumstances applicable to the subject land including size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings:
There are no unique physical circumstances of the site which distinguish it from many other undeveloped sites in the city of Hemet. Instead, the basis for this variance request is that the zoning standard itself is out of touch with current architectural and development standards. The argument will be based on several factors. The first will analyze the private open space requirements of other cities in Riverside County to demonstrate that the Hemet standard greatly exceeds the general sizes required in comparable areas. Secondly, we will demonstrate several ways that the proposed project exceeds other Hemet city standards, including Common

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Open Space and Unit Sizes, which we believe create a better overall project opposed to sacrificing these elements to reach the private open space requirement.

The following information is to provide the city with supporting documentation of current private open space standards in similar areas.

Table C-1
Comparative Private Open Space Requirements Analysis: *

	Aster Apartments (Proposed)		City of Hemet	City of Riverside	City of Corona	Palm Desert
Zone	R-3		R-3	R-3	R-3	R-3
Common Open Space	268 sf per unit		250 sf per unit	200 sf per unit	200 sf per unit	300 sf per unit
Private Open Space						
Studio	PS - A	63 sf	100 sf per unit	100 sf per ground floor unit 50 sf per upper floor unit	25% of required open space to be private open space (25% of 200 sf = 50 sf per unit)	No Private open Space Minimum
1 Bedroom	P1 - A	85 sf	100 sf per unit			
	P1 - A (Ground floor patio)	206 sf				
2 Bedroom	P2 - A	88 sf	150 sf per unit			
	P2 - A (Ground floor patio)	243 sf				
	P2 - B	83 sf				
	P2 - B (Ground floor patio)	198 sf				
	Average	107 sf per unit	125 sf per unit			

**The information in the table above was collected from the current zoning codes of each municipality.*

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Table C-1 above demonstrates that the proposed patio and balcony sizes of the Aster Apartments exceed the requirements for Private Open Space in comparable zones in cities within Riverside County. The current general trend of development standards is to emphasize the creation of usable common area amenities which are more functional and create better community appeal than private balconies. Market research also supports that residents prefer a strong amenity package featuring spaces which support activities that could not occur on a private patio or balcony. Examples include fitness centers, reservable clubroom, co-working lounge, fire pits, and barbeques, all of which the Aster Apartments provide.

The Aster Apartments exceeds several other development standards set forth in the City Code and provides a strong amenity package which creates a more desirable community. One standard that is exceeded is the minimum Unit Sizes, the Hemet Multiple-Family Zone Minimum Development Standards require 550 sf for studios, 700 sf for one-bedroom, 850 sf for two-bedrooms. The Aster Apartments unit sizes are 599 sf studios, 726 sf one-bedrooms, 1,050 sf two-bedroom and 1,119 sf two-bedroom. The studios exceed the requirement by 49 sf, the one-bedrooms by 26 sf and the two-bedrooms by 200 sf. Large units are more desirable to potential residents and the units created for this project are very functional and spacious which makes them far more desirable than extra outdoor area which is generally used far less by residents than indoor space. Shifting this excess area to an outdoor patio would detract from the overall quality of the interior space of each unit and would lose a large amount of functional space that residents would use every day in favor of outdoor space which will be used less frequently.

Another development standard which is exceeded is the required Common Open Space. (See Table C-1 above which demonstrates the common open space provided and required.) The common open space proposed for the Aster Apartments is programed with a strong amenity package which includes a combination of outdoor spaces and a clubhouse / leasing office. The amenity package proposed for the Aster Apartments includes, a reservable clubhouse space, a co-working lounge, a fitness center, a pool and spa with associated lounge spaces, barbeque areas, a tot-lot, a walking path, a dog park, and a community area with space for food truck parking. This strong amenity package creates a very desirable community with features that can be utilized by all residents. A key feature is the large clubhouse which includes a kitchen with countertop seating as well as multiple indoor seating areas with TVs and an outdoor seating area with a fire pit. This space can be reserved by residents to host events such as birthday parties. These spaces contribute to a project that is more responsive to the modern needs and desires of residents by providing them with useful common areas.

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D) The strict application of zoning standards deprives the property of the right to use the land in a manner enjoyed by other conforming property in the vicinity under identical zoning standards: In examining the existing multifamily developments in the city of Hemet it appears that many do not meet the current required private open space standards. Table D-1 below demonstrates the collected observations of existing properties in the city which do not meet these standards. The result of this variance request would allow the use of this property in a manner that is enjoyed by other similar properties.

Table D-1
Comparative Local Balcony Size Analysis:

	Aster Apartments (Proposed)		Palm Court Apartments	EvRia New Diamond	Azul Apartment Homes	Amberwood Villas
Zone	R-3		R-3	R-3	R-3	R-3
Address	268 sf per unit		3800 W Devonshire Ave, Hemet, CA	1025 S Gilbert St, Hemet, CA	2770 West Devonshire Avenue, Hemet	2098 W Acacia Ave, Hemet, CA
Studio	PS - A	63 sf	41 sf*	na	na	na
1 Bedroom	P1 - A	85 sf	65 sf*	64 sf*	45 sf*	100 sf*
	P1 - A (Ground floor patio)	206 sf				
2 Bedroom	P2 - A	88 sf	33 sf*	91 sf*	81 sf*	120 sf*
	P2 - A (Ground floor patio)	243 sf				
	P2 - B	83 sf				
	P2 - B (Ground floor patio)	198 sf				

* Approximate size based on available floor plans

Table D-1 above demonstrates that the proposed balcony sizes of the Aster Apartments are consistent with the balcony sizes in existing apartment developments in the city of Hemet.

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Many of these apartments are older and were likely developed using different city standards for what is enforced today. In our research we could not find any apartment development built within the last 20 years in the city of Hemet to make a comparison. This variance would allow the use of this property in a manner consistent existing developments in the city of Hemet.

E) The approval of a variance shall not constitute a grant of special privileges which other conforming properties in the vicinity do not enjoy under identical zoning standards:

The approval of this variance would not create a special privilege for this property. It would allow the property to be used in a manner enjoyed by many existing properties in the city of Hemet. In recognition that the general trend of development standards and market desires have changed since the creation of the private open space requirement in the city of Hemet, this variance would grant the fair use of this property. The same consideration could be granted to any other property in the city that came forward with a similar reasonable request. A conclusion that may be drawn from this analysis is that the City of Hemet could reevaluate its private open space standards to be more in line with current practices in comparable areas, which could encourage future development in the city.

Sincerely,



Highpointe Communities Inc.
James Coleman

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