



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

File #: 22-1031, Version: 1

REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Proposed Project:

DESIGN REVIEW: Construct a new two-story single-family home resulting in 2,528 square feet gross floor area (2,109 square feet living area and 419 square feet garage) and 45.4% Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The project also includes a new 790 square foot attached Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU).

Location: 691 Toyon Avenue (APN: 213-10-038)

File #: 2022-7198

Zoning: R-0

Applicant / Owner: Michelle Miner Design (applicant) / Ankush and Vibha Gupta (owners)

Environmental Review: A Class 3 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from CEQA provisions.

Project Planner: Aastha Vashist, (408) 730-7458, avashist@sunnyvale.ca.gov

REPORT IN BRIEF

General Plan: Low Density Residential

Existing Site Conditions: One-story single-family home

Surrounding Land Uses

North: One-story single-family home

South: Two-story single-family homes across Dahlia Drive

East: One-story single-family homes across Toyon Avenue

West: One-story single-family home

Issues: Neighborhood compatibility and compliance with the Single-Family Home Design Techniques.

Staff Recommendation: Approve the Design Review with the Conditions of Approval in Attachment 4.

BACKGROUND

Description of Proposed Project

The project includes the construction of a new two-story single-family residence with 2,528 square feet of gross floor area and 45.4% floor area ratio (FAR) on a 5,568 square-foot corner lot. The applicants also propose an attached 790 square foot ADU which is not counted towards the floor area and FAR.

The project is considered a new home per the City's Major Residential Remodel Policy because at least 50% of the exterior walls above the foundation are proposed for removal, and the plate heights are proposed to be increased for at least 50% of the exterior walls. Therefore, the project is subject to the requirements for a new home.

A Design Review permit is required to construct an addition or new home to evaluate compliance with development standards and the City's Single-Family Home Design Techniques. Planning Commission review is required for homes exceeding 45% FAR or 3,600 square feet of gross floor area.

See Attachment 1 for a map of the vicinity and mailing area for notices and Attachment 2 for the project data table.

Previous Actions on the Site

There are no previous related planning applications or active neighborhood preservation cases for this property.

EXISTING POLICY

The City's Single-Family Home Design Techniques provide recommendations for site layout, architecture, and design. These guidelines are referenced in the discussion and analysis below. Refer to Attachment 3 for the required Design Review findings.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A Class 3 Categorical Exemption (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301) relieves this project from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) that consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures. A new single-family residence is covered by this exemption.

DISCUSSION

Architecture and Site Design

The site is a corner lot located on the northwest corner of Toyon Avenue and Dahlia Drive. The existing one-story home is designed in the Ranch style. The immediate vicinity primarily consists of one-story Ranch homes that were developed in the 1950s and 1960s. Additions and improvements have been made to a few neighboring homes over the years.

A block south of the project are two planned developments (R-0/PD and R-1.5/PD) of 51 two-story homes built by Toll Brothers in 2013 and 58 recently constructed two-story homes on a former 8.8-acre farmland site (formerly known as the Corn Palace). These two planned developments consist of two-story homes with gross floor areas averaging 3,536 square feet (58% FAR) for the Toll Brothers development and 3,232 square feet (69% FAR) on the former Corn Palace site. These two planned developments are located within the subject site's "neighborhood" as defined by the Single-Family Home Design Techniques because these are within the immediately adjacent block. However, staff finds that these two planned developments are stand-alone infill projects and do not provide an appropriate neighborhood context for the character, mass, and bulk of other neighborhood homes that existed prior to their development.

The proposed architectural style can be categorized as Ranch Style with a simple roof design and rectilinear form. Like the homes in the Toll Brothers development, the design includes elements of Traditional and European architecture styles including decorative window shutters, a combination of stucco and stone veneers, ornamental metal entry door, true divided light windows with trims, decorative eave trims, arched entry and windows, and decorative brackets. All exterior materials and finishes work together as a palette of white colors with dark brown eaves and accents.

The existing home has a legally non-conforming six-foot reducible front yard setback (Dahlia Drive), where nine feet is the minimum required setback. Pursuant to Sunnyvale Municipal Code Section 19.34.040, the longer street frontage of corner lots is considered a reducible front yard. The proposed project will not result in any modifications to the existing first-floor walls along the reducible front yard and, therefore, will not increase the legal non-conformity.

Overall, staff finds the proposed modifications, architectural style, and building materials compatible with the character of the existing home and adjacent homes. See Attachment 5, Site and Architectural Plans, and Attachment 7, applicant's project description letter.

Floor Area and Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

The existing home has a FAR of 36%. The proposed 45.4% FAR requires Planning Commission review since the proposed addition increases the house size past the 45% FAR threshold. The existing floor area and FAR of the single-family homes in the neighborhood range from 1,647 square feet to 2,708 square feet (1,862 square feet average) and 27% to 49% FAR (33% FAR average). See Attachment 6 for a neighborhood area comparison. The proposed FAR is well within the existing range in the neighborhood.

Given that the project will have all-electric appliances, the City's Green Building Program allows the project to either increase lot coverage by 5% or qualify for staff-level design review with an FAR up to 50% or 4,000 sq. ft. (whichever is less). New single-family homes are subject to the City's Reach Code requirements, which exceed the state's standard building codes. The Reach Codes prohibit gas line connections and requires all-electric appliances for new homes. Although the project qualifies for staff-level design review with an FAR up to 50%, the applicant chooses to proceed with the Planning Commission review.

Second-to-First-Floor Ratio

The City's Single-Family Home Design Techniques recommends a maximum of 35% second-to-first-floor ratio for predominantly one-story neighborhoods. The project proposes a 53% second-to-first-floor ratio. For context, in 2013 the City Council approved a first and second floor addition for a neighboring home at 663 Toyon Avenue (file no. 2013-7319) with a 33% second-to-first floor ratio. In 2017, the Planning Commission denied a proposed second-floor addition to the existing one-story home at 635 Toyon Avenue (File no. 2016-7779) with a 93% second-to-first-floor ratio.

The mass and bulk of the proposed addition does not appear consistent with the neighboring one- and two-story homes. The location of the proposed second floor area is at the minimum side yard setback adjacent to the neighboring one-story home to the north. The high-volume interior spaces at the front and rear increases the apparent visual bulk of the second floor. Therefore, staff does not support the high second-to-first floor ratio and recommends reducing it to 35% (refer to Condition PS-1a, Attachment 4), consistent with guideline SF-1 of the City's Single-Family Home Design Techniques.

Neighborhood Impacts and Compatibility

The surrounding neighborhood mostly consists of one-story, Ranch-style single-family homes. The subject corner lot is located at the edge of the neighborhood adjacent to the Toll Brothers and Corn Palace planned developments that have an eclectic mix of Modern Farmhouse, Spanish, Traditional, and European-style homes.

Staff finds the proposed Ranch-style home with elements of Traditional and European architectural styles to be compatible with the neighborhood and the existing streetscape. The proposed home with an overall height of 26 feet has compatible heights with the existing 24-foot-tall two-story home at 663 Toyon Avenue.

The proposed second floor addition is at the minimum required seven-foot side yard setback from the adjoining one-story home to the north. Staff recommends that the second-floor side yard windows facing the adjoining one-story home (except those required for egress) must have high sills to minimize privacy impacts to the neighbors (Attachment 4, Condition PS-1b). As conditioned, staff finds that the proposed design will generally comply with the Single-Family Home Design Techniques.

Development Standards

The proposed project complies with all the applicable development standards as set forth in the Sunnyvale Municipal Code, such as lot coverage, parking, height, and setbacks. The project data table is in Attachment 2.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impacts other than normal fees and taxes are expected. The project is subject to a Transportation Impact Fee (TIF) estimated at \$1,219.45 for the proposed new attached 790-square-foot ADU. TIF is required for ADUs over 750 square feet and is based on the proportion of the ADU to the main house area.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Notice of Public Hearing

- Published in the *Sun* newspaper
- Posted on the site
- 65 notices mailed to property owners and residents within 300 feet of the project site

Agenda and Staff Report

- Agenda and staff report posted on the City's website
- Agenda posted on the City's official notice bulletin board

As of the date of staff report production, staff has not received any public comments.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Design Review with the Conditions of Approval in Attachment 4.
2. Approve the Design Review with modified conditions.
3. Deny the Design Review and provide direction to staff and the applicant where changes should be made.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Approve the Design Review with the Conditions of Approval in Attachment 4.

Prepared by: Aastha Vashist, Senior Planner

Approved by: George Schroeder, Principal Planner

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity and Noticing Map
2. Project Data Table
3. Recommended Findings
4. Recommended Conditions of Approval
5. Architectural and Site Plans
6. Neighborhood Square Footage Comparison
7. Applicant's Project Description Letter