

RECOMMENDED FINDINGS
2015-7259
423 E. Maude Ave.

Design Review

The Citywide Design Guidelines that relate to this project are:

- **Design Guideline #2.B.7.** Placement of windows and openings on second story additions should not create a direct line of sight into the living space or the back yard of adjacent properties to maintain privacy.
- **Design Guideline #2.C.1.** Maintain diversity and individuality in style but be compatible with the character of the neighborhood.
- **Design Guideline #2.C.2.** In areas where no prevailing architectural style exists, maintain the general neighborhood character by the use of similar scale, forms, and materials providing that it enhances the neighborhood.
- **Design Guideline #2.C.3.** Develop a comprehensive architectural theme for multi-building complexes. Unify various site components through the use of similar design, material, and colors.
- **Design Guideline #2.D.4.** Vary roof levels and forms on a large building to create diversity and to decrease the apparent scale of the building.
- **Design Guideline #2.E.1.** Develop a comprehensive material and color scheme for each project to tie in the various parts of the project. Choose a variety of colors and materials to add interest to buildings.

In order to approve the Design Review, the decision maker must find that the project's design and architecture will conform to requirements of the "Citywide Design Guidelines". (*Finding met*)

The proposed project meets the Citywide Design Guidelines as listed above by providing 11 ownership housing units with high quality architectural design and materials. While there are no other three-story structures within the immediate neighborhood, the buildings comply with height limits and the building forms and architectural design help to reduce visual massing from the streetscape. The architectural style, colors and materials are consistent throughout with variations in their application to allow for individuality between the units. Changes in wall planes and roof lines help to break up the massing of the buildings. Window and door detailing help to add visual interest. Privacy impacts to abutting neighbors along the west and north property lines are minimal as setback requirements are met. In addition, the building facing the single-family homes along the north property line has been designed with high-sill windows. Trees planted along the site perimeter will also further reduce privacy impacts. The project will enhance the neighborhood aesthetics and contribute positively to the streetscape.

Variance

1. Because of exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applicable to the property, or use, including size, shape, topography, location or surroundings, the strict application of the ordinance is found to deprive the property owner or privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity and within the same zoning district. *(Finding met)*

The corner lot is encumbered by two required front yards, a corner vision triangle, and an unusual lot shape that limits siting options for buildings. The proposed site layout and reduced average front yard setback along Maude Avenue allows for incorporation of an on-site trash cart staging area and a pedestrian walkway from the parking lot to the street frontage along Morse Avenue. Options to reduce the number of units are restricted, as the minimum number of units required by the General Plan is proposed.

2. The granting of the Variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property, improvements or uses within the immediate vicinity and within the same zoning district. *(Finding met)*

The buildings have been designed to reduce visual impacts associated with setback deficiencies. Entry features and a building band have been incorporated into the Maude Avenue street elevations to help create visual interest and enhance the pedestrian-level experience. Wall projections, window detailing, and varying roof lines further help to reduce visual massing. The site benefits associated with the Variance, including the incorporation of a pedestrian walkway and on-site trash cart staging, help to enhance the project and reduce potential impacts to the neighborhood.

3. Upon granting of the Variance, the intent and purpose of the ordinance will still be served and the recipient of the Variance will not be granted special privileges not enjoyed by other surrounding property owners within the same zoning district. *(Finding met)*

Reduced front yard setbacks are not uncommon for multi-family residential projects along Maude Avenue. Several other buildings, such as the adjacent apartment building to the west and across Maude Avenue, were built with average front yard setbacks between 14 feet and 17 feet. Therefore, the proposed average front yard setback of 18 feet 10 inches is in keeping with the established character of the neighborhood.

Vesting Tentative Map

In order to approve the Vesting Tentative Map, the proposed subdivision must be consistent with the general plan. Staff finds that the Tentative Map is in conformance with the General Plan. However, if any of the following findings can be made, the Tentative Map shall be denied.

1. That the subdivision is not consistent with the General Plan.
2. That the design or improvement of the proposed subdivision is not consistent with the General Plan.
3. That the site is not physically suitable for the proposed type of development.
4. That the site is not physically suitable for the proposed density of development.
5. That the design of the subdivision or proposed improvements is likely to cause substantial environmental damage or substantially and avoidably injure fish or wildlife or their habitat.
6. That the design of the subdivision or type of improvements is likely to cause serious public health problems.
7. That the design of the subdivision or the type of improvements will conflict with easements, acquired by the public at large, for access through or use of property within the proposed subdivision.
8. That the map fails to meet or perform one or more requirements or conditions imposed by the "Subdivision Map Act" or by the Municipal Code.

Staff was not able to make any of the following findings and recommends approval of the Tentative Map.