

Dear City of Sunnyvale,

We are writing to you as the new owners of 225 Waverly Street in Sunnyvale, listed on the heritage resource inventory list for Sunnyvale. We are trying our best to repair and modernize this heritage resource in a manner consistent with your own guidelines for heritage resource homes. To do this, we are asking for two variances related to the "2nd covered parking" rule as well as the "combined setback rule". We give our reasons for each variance below, and thank you for your consideration!

Reasons for a "2nd Covered Parking" variance:

- 1) The most important aspect of our request is that this house is a heritage resource, which designates this house as an architecturally important house in the City of Sunnyvale's development and history.
- 2) Architectural Integrity of a Heritage Resource - Requiring two covered parking spots on a house of this period is architecturally inconsistent with the bungalow style of the house. Homes of this period simply did not have two garages or carports. Therefore requiring these to be retroactively installed on a heritage resource would actually be destroying the architectural features that we are supposed to be preserving in the home. Our submitted plan takes a minimalist approach to improving the house, where we are only trying to improve upon the living space of the house in an architecturally consistent manner. Our submitted proposal is therefore doing the most we can to maintain the architectural character of the home and is also following the recommendation from the City's own Taaffe-Frances Design guidelines (Design Principle E) adopted on March 24, 2009 which states: "Alterations, additions and other exterior improvements should be consistent with the original architectural style of the home". While this heritage resource is not located within the Taaffe-Frances neighborhood, it is a heritage resource and we are doing our best to preserve and maintain the character of the home.
- 3) Preserving neighborhood integrity and roots - While the neighborhood is most certainly mixed (due to people tearing down old homes and rebuilding), there are many homes in the area that are from this era (although not heritage resources). Detached 1 car garages are actually quite common for the older homes in the neighborhood. Our neighbor to the immediate rear of the house has a single car, detached garage.
- 4) Even if we tried to design something to meet the covered parking rule (and thereby destroying the architectural integrity of the house) there are special circumstances for the property that would represent a hardship. The garage already sits in violation of the set back rules since it is about 1 foot from the north property line. The only way to meet the "2 covered space" rule, would be to enlarge the garage and also move the garage to another location. The only location that it could be moved to and obey the property line setbacks is the back rear of the lot, but this would require destroying a very large and old magnolia tree. I cite the Design Principle G from the Taaffe Frances Design guidelines which states: "Wherever possible, mature trees and landscaping should be protected during construction and integrated into new landscape plans." Finally, we are further constrained by our placement of the garage by the lot shape. It is a 50x120 foot lot, which means it is narrower than most other lots in Sunnyvale, which makes a 2 car garage design unwieldy.
- 5) By extending a variance to the "2 covered space" rule, the City would be preserving the architectural character of a heritage resource, as well as enhancing the neighborhood roots by allowing the house to remain consistent with other period homes in the neighborhood which have 1 car garages.

Reasons for a Combined Setback Rule Variance:

- 1) Again, the most important aspect of our request is that this house is a heritage resource, which designates this house as an architecturally important house in the City of Sunnyvale's development and history.
- 2) There are two ways to solve the combined setback problem on this heritage resource, a) jog the addition on the south property line inwards by 4 feet so the combined setback is 10 (9 on the south side and 1 on the north side), or move the garage or shrink the garage to a smaller size. The second pathway to resolving the combined setback (by altering the garage) breaks many of the points I raised above, and therefore the only way to meet the combined setback requirement is to jog the addition inwards by about 4 feet.

3) Bungalows of this period were typically rectangular in nature, which the current floor plans show off quite nicely. The best way to preserve architectural integrity of the heritage resource is to maintain a shape on the house that is generally consistent with the bungalow style, ie a rectangle. We could certainly design an addition off the back that winds inward from the property line in an effort to meet the "combined setback" rule, but this would create an aesthetically less appealing jog to the heritage resource. Allowing a variance would actually enhance and maintain the character of the heritage resource. I again point out Design Principle E from the Taaffe Frances design guidelines which states "Alterations, additions and other exterior improvements should be consistent with the original architectural style of the home". An addition designed to meet the "combined setback" requirement would in fact violate those guidelines.

4) It is important to point out that we are obeying the individual setback on the south side of the property line with our submitted plan, and we are being sensitive to the architectural character of the heritage resource by not altering the garage on the north side. The garage is already in violation of the setback requirements, but is grandfathered in due to the age of the home. In our submitted plan, we are also obeying the setback requirements between structures (the garage and the home). A variance should be given to this heritage resource since the "combined setback" requirement would require creating an architecturally less appealing and less consistent housing footprint to the original home.

You will notice that our submitted addition proposal and our request for the two variances, are consistent with your own document on "Variance Justifications" where three points must be true for the variance to be considered.

- 1) "Because of 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 of privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity and within the same zoning district." As proven above, our narrow lot, combined with the location of a large tree as well the heritage resource guidelines on additions, provide extraordinary circumstances that would prevent us from adding onto the structure in any meaningful way if a strict interpretation of the two rules is applied. The privilege of modernizing and improving one's home is enjoyed by all the other properties in the area.
- 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." As proven above, the proposed addition will not materially impact neighbors. The proposed addition would be a single story well within the confines of single sided setbacks, and it is only through the pre-existing, non-conforming detached garage (which we would not be touching) would the violations be triggered. Granting the variances would not be harmful in any way to the immediate neighboring structures, nor neighborhood itself. In fact the neighborhood would be enhanced by having an well preserved, and architecturally appropriate heritage resource pointing to the neighborhoods roots in early Sunnyvale history.
- 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." The addition is a small addition to the rear of the property, which would add a second bathroom and a family room. A fourth bedroom is **not** being added so the intent of the "second covered parking" is still maintained which is having an appropriate amount of covered parking relative to the number of people living in the structure. It will still be a 3 bedroom home.

Summary: The heritage resource that we purchased is definitely in need of repair and modernization (foundation, supports, chimney, electrical, etc), as the previous owners neglected upkeep on the house. We are trying our best to invest the money into the home to preserve the architectural character such that this heritage resource will last another 100 years. In order to do this, we would require the two variances described above. The property is definitely a unique property and one that will continue to provide Sunnyvale a link to its past if we are able to modernize and repair the home. We are doing our best to work within the guidelines set forth by the City of Sunnyvale, and look forward to working with

the City as a partnership to make sure this heritage resource is preserved. Balancing the needs for meeting modern planning codes with the specific needs of preserving the historic and architectural character of heritage resources is a tough challenge. I think you will find that our proposed addition keeps with the spirit of both these needs as we seek to modernize and preserve a heritage resource. We would just require the two small variances above. Please let me know if you have any questions and thank you for your consideration!

Michael Lam  
225 Waverly Street  
Sunnyvale, CA 94086  
408-205-7283