



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

18-0374

Agenda Date: 5/14/2018

REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Proposed Project:

DESIGN REVIEW: to allow a new one-story single family home resulting in 1,963 square feet (1,640 square feet of living area and 323 square foot one-car garage) and 49% floor area ratio on a 4,000-square foot lot;

VARIANCE: to allow the following deviations:

- 10-15' front yard setback where 20' minimum is required;
- 7' 2" combined side yard setback where 10' minimum is required;
- 49% lot coverage where 45% maximum is permitted;
- One-covered parking space where two-covered parking spaces are required; and,
- No uncovered parking spaces where two-uncovered parking spaces are required.

Location: 814 Coolidge Avenue (APN: 165-17-017)

File #: 2017-7765

Zoning: R-2 (Low Medium Density Residential)

Applicant / Owner: Joe and Raquel Fanucchi (applicant) / (owner)

Environmental Review: Class 1 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provisions that include minor additions to an existing single-family residence (CEQA Section 15301).

Project Planner: Cindy Hom, (408) 730-7411, chom@sunnyvale.ca.gov

REPORT IN BRIEF

General Plan: Low Medium Density Residential

Existing Site Conditions: Single-story residence

Surrounding Land Uses

North: One-Story Single Family Residence

South: Two-Story Single Family Residence

East: One-Story Single Family Residence

West: Two-Story Single Family Residence

Issues: Setbacks, parking, and visual bulk and massing on a substandard lot.

Staff Recommendation: Approve the Design Review and Variance with the conditions in Attachment 4.

BACKGROUND

The project was scheduled and noticed for the Planning Commission meeting on March 26, 2018, and continued to the Planning Commission meeting on May 14, 2018 to allow re-noticing of the project with an updated project description.

The project consists of a 543-square foot one-story addition to the left side, rear and front of an

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existing single-family home, resulting in 1,963 square feet and 49% floor area ratio and lot coverage. The proposed project is considered a new home due to significant portions of exterior walls being removed; therefore, the entire structure, including the existing portions to remain and the proposed addition, is required to be evaluated under the current development standards.

Many of the Variance items are requested because the subject site is 4,000 square feet in size and 40 feet wide rather than the typical R-2-zoned lot which is 8,000 square feet in size and 76 feet wide. The front setback Variance items are because the project is required to provide a 5-foot wide street dedication along Coolidge Avenue to accommodate a future widening of the road. After the required street dedication, the net lot area is further reduced to 3,800 square feet.

This project requires Planning Commission review because the proposed Floor Area Ratio (FAR) exceeds 45% for single family homes and to consider the requested deficiencies. 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 Project Site: The existing home was originally constructed in 1952 as part of the Fuller Tract Subdivision. Based on the permit history, there are no previous planning permits granted to the subject site. However, there was a building permit issued for the construction of a carport in 1953 that has been since converted to a garage.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A Class 1 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provisions that include minor additions to an existing single-family residence (CEQA Section 15301).

DISCUSSION

Site Layout

The subject site is located on a substandard 4,000-square foot lot developed with a 1,069-square foot single-story home and a 351-square foot detached garage located at the rear half of the lot. The garage is served by an existing 9' 10" wide driveway accessed from Coolidge Avenue.

The applicant proposes to demolish a significant portion of the home, including the existing non-conforming detached one-car garage. The applicant also proposes to maintain the existing walls on front and right side elevations to accommodate a 543 square-foot single-story addition and a new attached one-car garage.

Development Standards

The proposed project complies with the many of the applicable development standards as set forth in Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC), but is also requesting relief from several items, which are discussed below. The Project Data Table for the project can be found in Attachment 2.

Variance

The applicant is requesting several deficiencies from the zoning development standards. The purpose and intent of a variance is to allow for deviations from current zoning requirements due to a physical hardship or unusual circumstances making it difficult for the property owner to comply with the zoning development standards or prevents the property owner from enjoying the same privileges as other property owners in the same vicinity.

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Many of the Variance items are requested to allow the new home to maintain existing non-conforming walls and due to the requirement to lose property for future road widening. The applicant is requesting a Variance for the following:

Front Setback - The existing front wall has a non-conforming setback of 18'. This setback is further reduced by the required 5' street dedication. For new homes, a 20' minimum front setback is required. The applicant is requesting consideration to allow the existing front wall of the house to continue to be set back at the current location of 13', after street dedication.

In addition, the existing front porch is proposed to be shifted to the right side and would continue the existing 10' front setback to the posts. The applicant is also requesting to build the new attached garage at a 15' front setback. Staff supports the front setback deficiencies because the proposed setback would not significantly detract from the character of the neighborhood and does not extend the new home further forward than the origin location. Substandard front setbacks are common for this neighborhood and similar Variances have been granted. The two homes on either side also maintain an average setback of 13 feet; therefore, the front setback deviation would be generally consistent with the precedent for the neighborhood.

Combined Side Setbacks - The proposed addition is to the left side the home and would provide a 4-foot left side yard setback, which complies with the minimum side yard setback. However, the right-side setback of 3' 2" (considered to be a legal non-conforming setback) combined with the 4' left side setback results in a combined setback of 7' 2" where 10' minimum is required. Staff is supportive of this deviation due to the narrow lot width. The Planning Commission has granted several Variances for reduced side yard setbacks for multiples homes along this block on Coolidge Avenue due to the hardship created by the substandard lot width. If the project was required to be redesigned to comply with this requirement, the relocation of the garage from the back corner of the lot towards the front would likely be infeasible due to the narrow lot size. In staff's opinion, relocating the garage is a positive feature of the project and allows for improved access into the garage. In addition, the detached garage is non-conforming with a side yard setback of less than 3' and rear yard setback of less than 6', and the new garage addition has greater setbacks. Therefore, staff recommends that the request is reasonable and is consistent with established precedent.

Lot Coverage - The applicant proposes a lot coverage of 49%, where 45% maximum is permitted. The request equates to 163 square feet above the maximum permitted floor area. The loss of property due to the dedication of an easement for street widening results in being inconsistent with the lot coverage requirements. This request would not be uncommon, given the substandard lot size. The Planning Commission has granted several Variances to exceed lot coverage for multiple homes on Coolidge Avenue. Therefore, the lot coverage deviation is consistent with the general neighborhood. Requiring the project to be redesigned to comply with the lot coverage requirement would likely result in a new second floor, which could potentially add visual bulk and mass to the street.

Covered Parking - The applicant proposes to maintain a one-covered parking space, where two-covered parking spaces are required for a new single-family home. Staff can support the deviation because the project is limited to expanding the kitchen and family room. No new bedrooms will be added; therefore, additional parking demand or spillover parking into the public street will not be anticipated. If the project were redesigned to provide two covered parking spaces in tandem, floor area from the kitchen and living room would be reduced and interior connections to the bedrooms

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would be obstructed. Furthermore, options to add to the rear of the home are limited due to existing setbacks and could only accommodate a 200 square feet addition.

Uncovered Parking - A new house would be required to provide two uncovered driveway spaces on a driveway that provide a minimum dimension of 17' in width by 20' in depth located in front of a garage or carport. Due to the street dedication, the resulting driveway would only be 15' deep, where 20' is required to accommodate uncovered parking. Parking on the substandard driveway would provide the potential for cars to overhang into the public right-of-way and block the sidewalk. Staff does not support the Variance request for this item because the proposed garage can be pushed back 5' while still allowing a reasonable kitchen and living room configuration. Therefore, since the project does not meet the minimum standards for uncovered parking spaces, staff considers the uncovered parking requirement not met and recommends a condition to redesign the garage to allow for two uncovered driveway parking spaces (17' wide by 20' deep) (see Attachment 4, Condition of Approval PS-2).

Floor Area Ratio

A single-family home exceeding 45% floor area ratio requires Planning Commission review. The existing homes in the neighborhood range from 511 square feet to 3,078 square feet, with an average of 1,579 square feet in size. The existing floor area ratios in the neighborhood range from 13% to 71%, with an average of 35% FAR. The proposed FAR of 49% would not be out of character because there is already an established precedent for FARs that exceed the 45%. Six out of the eight homes have a 50% FAR or greater. As proposed, the home is designed to complement the character of the neighborhood by maintaining a similar architectural style and the use of similar roof forms and front entry design.

Architecture

Coolidge Avenue includes a mix of one and two story homes as well as duplexes. There is also a variety of architectural styles in the neighborhood that includes Craftsman, Bungalow, Traditional Ranch and contemporary Mediterranean. The proposed one-story home reflects the Bungalow style with the use of stucco, horizontal siding, gable and hip roof forms and a wide covered porch. The proposed colors and materials are included in the project plans which can be found in Attachment 5.

A project-specific condition (see Attachment 4, Condition of Approval PS-1) has been added to incorporate additional decorative elements to the front façade to help add visual interest and provide a material break to the proposed stucco walls. Staff recommends the project plans are revised to include the following architectural treatment:

- Enhanced window sills
- Decorative porch brackets and columns wraps that reinforce the architectural style of the home
- Decorative front gable end that utilizes siding or shingle and decorative gable brackets that reinforces the architectural style

Applicable Design Guidelines

The proposed home is consistent with the adopted Single-Family Home Design Techniques. The recommended Findings can be found in Attachment 3.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impacts other than normal fees and taxes are expected.

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Notice of Public Hearing, Staff Report and Agenda:

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

Public Contact: At the time the staff report was prepared, staff has received one inquiry from the public.

Conclusion:

Staff can support the deviations for front yard setback, combined side yard setback, lot coverage, and one covered parking space due to physical hardship and unique circumstances with the substandard lot conditions and required 5-foot street dedication. The deviations would not be considered a special privilege considering other homes have been granted similar variances. Staff was not, however, able to make the findings to support the request to allow for no uncovered parking spaces and recommends the project is revised to meet the requirement.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Design Review and Variances to allow deviations for front yard setback, combined side yard setback, lot coverage and one covered parking space; deny the Variance for no uncovered parking spaces, subject to the findings in Attachment 3 and Conditions of Approval in Attachment 4.
2. Approve the Design Review and Variance to allow deviations for front yard setback, combined side yard setback, lot coverage, one covered parking space, and no uncovered parking spaces, subject to modified findings and conditions.
3. Approve the Design Review and Variance for certain deficiencies as determined by the Planning Commission, subject to modified findings and conditions of approval.
4. Deny the Design Review and Variance and provide direction to staff and the applicant where changes should be made.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend Alternative 1 in accordance with the Findings in Attachment 3 and Conditions of Approval in Attachment 4.

Prepared by: Cindy Hom, Associate Planner

Approved by: Noren Caliva-Lepe, Senior Planner

Approved by: Andrew Miner, Assistant Director, Community Development

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity and Noticing Radius Map
2. Project Data Table
3. Recommended Findings
4. Recommended Conditions of Approval
5. Project Plans

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6. FAR Analysis