



---

File #: 16-0708, Version: 1

---

### REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

#### SUBJECT

**File #:** 2015-8135

**Location:** 523 Carroll Street (APN: 209-31- 007)

**Zoning:** R-0

#### **Proposed Project:**

**DESIGN REVIEW:** For a new two-story single-family home of 3,157 square feet (2,755 square foot living area and 402 square foot garage) and 49.9 percent Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The existing 1,704 square foot one-story single-family home and detached garage will be demolished.

**Applicant / Owner:** SC Design Group (applicant) / Wei Man Vivien Cheung (owner)

**Environmental Review:** Categorical Class 3 Exemption for construction of small structures that include a single-family residence.

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

#### REPORT IN BRIEF

**General Plan:** Residential Low Density

**Existing Site Conditions:** Single-Family Residence

#### **Surrounding Land Uses**

**North:** One-story Single-Family Residence

**South:** One-story Single-Family Residence

**East:** Two-story Single-Family Residence (across Carroll Street)

**West:** Two-story Single-Family Residence

**Issues:** Tree Preservation, Consistency with Single-Family Home Design Techniques

**Staff Recommendation:** Approve the Design Review based on the Findings in Attachment 3 and with the recommended Conditions in Attachment 4.

#### BACKGROUND

##### Description of Proposed Project

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing 1,704 square feet one-story single-family residence built in 1953 and construct a new two-story, single-family residence. The proposed building size would total 3,157 square feet including a 402 square foot garage with a resulting floor area ratio (FAR) of 49.9 percent. The applicant proposes the removal the existing front yard protected tree (Douglas Fir with 34.3 inches trunk diameter) as it conflicts with the current design including the garage location.

A Design Review Permit is required for construction of a new residence to evaluate compliance with development standards and with the Single Family Home Design Techniques. The Planning Commission review is required for homes that exceed 45 percent FAR. There are no prior planning applications for the project site.

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

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Architecture and Site Design**

The existing neighborhood is mostly comprised of one-story, single-family residences, which are Ranch-style with simple rectilinear forms. The neighborhood was developed in the 1950s, and many of the homes in the block have detached garage in the rear. The project site is located mid-block on the west side of Carroll Street between East Olive Avenue and Old San Francisco Road. The existing home is one story and has a detached garage in the rear with a 10-foot wide driveway leading to the rear on the right side of the property. The applicant proposes the relocation of the driveway to the left side of the property that requires the removal of the existing protected tree in the front yard. The proposed design is Mediterranean in nature that includes a clay tile roof with moderate pitches, stucco walls, arches, and hip and gable roof forms.

The 2,103 square-foot first floor would consist of a two-car garage, a bedroom, one-and-a-half bathrooms, a kitchen, office and living, and dining rooms. The 1,054 square-foot second floor consists of three bedrooms and two bathrooms.

### **Tree Preservation**

The applicant proposes to remove the front yard Douglas Fir tree with 34.3-inch trunk diameter (greater than 75" circumference) located towards the left side of the front yard as part of this application. Protected tree refers to a tree which is thirty-eight inches or greater in circumference measured four and one-half feet above the ground. SMC Section 19.94, encourages the proper protection and maintenance of significantly sized trees and the City's Single Family Home Design Techniques also recommend the preservation of mature trees and integration into the new landscaping plans. SMC Section 19.94.060 provides the criteria for allowing the removal of a protected tree. The Staff has been unable to make the required findings for allowing the removal of the protected tree, therefore, included a condition (PS-1) requiring the applicant to make the recommended design changes to preserve the protected tree. The required findings for the Tree Removal are included in the Attachment 3.

The Certified Arborist Report, provided by the applicant, indicates that the Douglas Fir tree is in excellent health condition (Attachment 7). The information was verified by the City Arborist, who recommended against the removal of the tree and recognized the tree as a community asset.

The applicant proposes to remove the tree as it conflicts with the current design. The proposed relocation of the existing driveway from the right side of the property to the left side results in the removal of the protected tree. In staff's opinion, there are opportunities to save the tree by widening the existing driveway and locating the garage on the right side of the property. However, in the applicant's opinion, this would impact the placement of the second floor, which is currently proposed on the left side of the property in order to accommodate a vaulted ceiling over the living room on the

right side of the proposed house.

Per the applicant, the location of the second floor over the right side of the house would interfere with solar access by shading more than 10 percent of the neighboring roof. The applicant further notes that relocating the garage to the right side of the building, as suggested by the staff, would prevent the desired vaulted living area ceiling line and, thereby, in the applicant's opinion reduce the quality of the project. In staff's opinion, the reasons to justify the proposed tree removal are inadequate as the application does not meet the required criteria to allow tree removal and the current design is inconsistent with the Single-Family Home Design Techniques. With recommended changes to the proposed home plans the tree can be saved, solar access protected and a reasonable project can be developed although the vaulted ceiling may require modification or elimination.

The City's Single Family Home Design Technique recommend that for new second stories in predominately one-story neighborhoods, the second floor area should not exceed 35% of the first floor area (including the garage area). The Design Techniques further recommend locating second floor additions over the living portion of existing homes rather than over garages and recommend setting the second floor areas as far as possible from the front façade of the wall. Staff recommends a condition (Condition PS-1B) that the applicant works to widen the existing driveway to avoid removal of the protected tree. As discussed below in the FAR section the reduction in the second-floor area and relocation of the second-floor area to the rear of the house might further help in complying with the solar access requirement and allow retention of the tree.

### **Privacy Impact**

There are existing adjacent one-story residences to the north and south of the property, and an adjacent two-story residence on the west side. The project meets the minimum required second-floor setback on the left side and exceeds the requirement on the right side and rear. The rear yard setback is double the 20 foot requirement.

The project proposes two windows on the left side, seven windows on the right side and a balcony on the rear. Privacy impacts for second-story windows facing the neighbor to the north (towards the right façade of the building) are minimized with the increased side setbacks, smaller windows, and the higher sill heights. However, the project proposes two large size second-floor windows (bathroom and bedroom) on the left side facing the single-family residence on the south side.

The proposed second floor deck overlooking the rear yard of the two-story property in the west is setback 40 feet from the rear property line, which is double the required setback. However, the Single Family Home Design Techniques recommend having balconies overlooking actively used yard space to be solid in form to minimize the privacy impacts on the neighbor.

Staff has included conditions of approval (Condition PS-1 C and D) to require any non-egress, second-story windows facing neighboring properties to have sills at least five feet above finished floor or vision obscured glass. Staff also recommends that the rear yard, second-story deck have solid a railing. Staff believes privacy impacts would be minimal with these conditions in place.

### **Floor Area Ratio (FAR)**

The neighborhood mostly contains one-story residences. The gross floor area of the neighboring residences ranges from 802 to 3,202 square feet (12.3% to 44.4% FAR), with an average of 1,925 square feet (24.8% FAR). The applicant proposes a floor area of 3,157 square feet resulting in 49.9 percent Floor Area Ratio. The subject lot is 6,339 square feet and is 1,427 square foot smaller in area

than the average lot size in the immediate neighborhood (7,766 square feet). See Attachment 6 for a gross floor area and FAR comparison. The proposed gross floor area (3,157 square feet) would make the home the second largest on the block, behind a 3,202 square-foot two-story home at 520 Carroll Street built in 1975. Photographs of the existing two-story residences along Carroll Street are included in the Attachment 8.

### **First Floor and Second Floor Area Ratio**

A majority of the surrounding single family homes in the neighborhood are single-story with a total of six two-story homes. Most of the two-story homes are located along South Sunnyvale Avenue towards the rear of the property, with only two of these along the Carroll Street (520 and 507). The existing residence at 507 Carroll Street minimizes the two-story bulk by integrating the second floor into the gable roof.

The City's Single Family Design Techniques suggest a second floor massing of up to 35% of the first floor when a neighborhood is predominantly single-story. The proposed project includes a second-floor area of 1,054 square feet, which constitutes approximately 50% of the 2,103 square-foot first floor area, including the garage. The difference between the proposed 50% second-story to first story ratio and 35% is nearly 300 square feet. The staff recommends that the applicant work with staff to reduce the second to first floor ratio to 35% or less (Condition PS-1A).

A reduction in the second story by 300 square feet will also help reduce the mass and bulk of the second story to help with neighborhood compatibility. Other areas of the home may also need to be adjusted or reduced to meet the recommended 35% second to first floor ratio. In addition to the recommended conditions of approval, the applicant may try locating the second floor above the rear portion of the house instead of the garage in order to further reduce the second floor area, mass and bulk, and avoid two-story heights at towards the street frontage.

### **Solar Access**

SMC 19.56.020 states that no permit may be issued for any construction which would interfere with solar access by shading more than 10 percent of the roof of any structure on a nearby property. Shading would not impact any adjacent homes or structures as demonstrated on Sheet A4.0 in Attachment 5 thereby complying with current solar access standards.

### **Development Standards**

The proposed project complies with the applicable development standards as outlined in the Sunnyvale Municipal Code, such as lot coverage, parking, height, and setbacks. The Project Data Table is located in Attachment 2.

### **Applicable Design Guidelines and Policy Documents**

With the recommended conditions in place to reduce the second to first story ratio to 35% and relocate the proposed driveway to preserve the protected tree in the front yard, staff would consider the proposed home to be consistent with the adopted Single-Family Home Design Techniques. It would be consistent with the overall size and second floor area of other two-story homes, and positively adds to the streetscape. The Staff has included findings for the Single-Family Home Design Techniques in Attachment 3.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

A Class 3 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provisions. Class 3 Categorical Exemptions include construction or conversion of new small structures that includes one single-family residence (CEQA Section 15303).

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

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

## **PUBLIC CONTACT**

### **Notice of Public Hearing**

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

### **Staff Report**

- Posted on the City's website
- Provided at the Reference Section of the City's Public Library

### **Agenda**

- Posted on the City's official notice bulletin board
- Posted on the City's website

**Public Contact:** Staff has not received any correspondence or phone calls from neighbors at the time of writing of this report.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Approve the Design Review with the recommended conditions in Attachment 4.
2. Approve the Design Review with modified conditions.
3. Deny the Design Review.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Alternative 1: Approve the Design Review based on the Findings in Attachment 3 and with the recommended Conditions in Attachment 4 to the report.

Prepared by: Aastha Vashist, Assistant Planner

Approved by: Gerri Caruso, Principal Planner

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Vicinity and Noticing Radius Map
2. Project Data Table
3. Findings for Approval
4. Recommended Conditions of Approval
5. Architectural Drawings
6. Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Table
7. Arborist Report
8. Site Photographs