



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

File #: 15-0241, Version: 1

REPORT TO HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

SUBJECT

File #: 2015-7032

Location: 225 Waverly Street (APN: 165-12-028)

Zoning: R-2 (Low-Medium Density Residential)

Proposed Project: Related applications on a 6,000 square-foot site:

RESOURCE ALTERATION PERMIT: For a 265 square-foot addition to a Heritage Resource.

VARIANCE: To allow one covered parking space where two covered parking spaces are required for an addition resulting in gross floor area greater than 1,800 square feet; and to allow for a combined side-yard setback of approximately 6 feet, 3 inches, where a minimum of 10 feet is required.

Applicant / Owner: Michael Lam (applicant/owner)

Environmental Review: Class 1 Categorical Exemption

Project Planner: Timothy Maier, (408) 730-7257, tmaier@sunnyvale.ca.gov

REPORT IN BRIEF

General Plan: Residential Low-Medium

Existing Site Conditions: Single-Family Residential (Heritage Resource)

Surrounding Land Uses

North: Single-Family Residential

South: Single-Family Residential

East: Single-Family Residential

West: Single-Family Residential

Issues: Compatibility of design, parking capacity and encroachment into required setbacks.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with conditions

BACKGROUND

Description of Proposed Project

The proposed project is a 265 square-foot addition located in the rear of an existing single-family home. The single-family home was designated as a Heritage Resource in 1979 and is a part of the Sunnyvale Heritage Resource Inventory. The City of Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC) requires review of any project that proposes construction, demolition, relocation, or material change to any historic resource.

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

Previous Actions on the Site

Minor building permits from the 1960's to the 1990's related to electrical, gas, and roofing upgrades have been issued for the site. No prior Planning permits have been issued.

Site Layout

The proposed project involves the reconfiguration of the interior of the existing home and incorporates an addition totaling 265 square feet, which would be placed in the rear of the home, at the westerly side of the property. The exterior of the proposed addition would align with the left-hand (southerly) wall of the home and extend 13 feet into the rear yard of the property, maintaining a 7-foot distance to the existing detached rear-yard garage (Attachment 3). As proposed, the detached rear-yard garage would remain in place, and all of the existing landscaping would remain, aside from landscaping located in that portion of the lot occupied by the proposed addition.

Architecture

The proposed addition would extend 13 feet from the rear facade of the existing home and contain 265 square feet gross floor area of additional living space. The southerly wall of the addition would align with the southerly wall of the six-foot long portion of the home protruding from the existing kitchen and bedroom (Attachment 3).

The proposed addition would replace the existing double-roof gable design of approximately 13 feet, 3 inch- maximum ridge height with a new roof structure composed of a single-gable design. The new roof will have a 15-foot maximum ridge height, whereas the main portion of the home features a maximum ridge height of approximately 16 feet. The pitch of the addition would match that of the existing home, with the southerly roof plane serving as a continuation of the existing roof.

The addition would take place along with rearrangement of the interior layout of the home, providing space for a new family room and bathroom; the kitchen would be reconfigured, and laundry facilities relocated to the portion of the home adjacent to the kitchen (Attachment 3).

New windows would be placed on all sides of the proposed addition. Window form and detailing will be differentiated from, but architecturally compatible with, the window design of the existing heritage resource, as shown on elevation plans (Attachment 5). The proposed addition would feature a stucco finish, providing appropriate continuity with the appearance of the home's existing exterior.

Resource Alteration Permit

The applicant has expressed interest in maintaining the historic value and appearance of the property, intending to propose a design sensitive to that of the existing home while adding floor space to improve livability. The applicant has not communicated a desire to request de-listing of the property from the City's Heritage Resources Inventory. Any modification to the existing Heritage Resource therefore requires approval of a Resource Alteration Permit.

Variance

The applicant requests two variances related to the proposed addition to the home.

Covered Parking

City of Sunnyvale Municipal Code Section 19.46.050 requires that a proposed “addition that results in a gross floor area of one thousand eight hundred square feet or more, including garages and carports,” provide two covered parking spaces to accommodate increased parking demand associated with additional living area.

The existing home contains three bedrooms, with a total gross floor area of 1,683 square feet (1,351 square feet of living space and 332 square-foot detached garage). The addition would result in a gross floor area of 1,948 square feet (1,616 square feet of living area and 332 square-foot garage). As proposed, the additional floor space would accommodate a new family room and bathroom, and would not increase the number of bedrooms.

The applicant requests retention of the existing detached 332 square-foot single-car garage. Strict application of SMC Section 19.46 would necessitate addition of a one covered parking space to accommodate a total of two covered parking spaces. However, this would likely require alteration or demolition of the existing detached garage, described by an architectural historian's evaluation as original to home construction, albeit altered over time (Attachment 5).

Setbacks

The subject property is located in a R-2 (Low-Medium Density) zoning district. Per SMC Section 19.34.030, each side-yard setback must measure minimally 4 feet, with a combined side-yard setback of twenty percent of lot width, but not less than 10 feet. Any modification to a portion of an existing property invokes the requirement for compliance with current Code standards for setbacks.

As proposed, the addition would continue the existing southerly wall line of the home and have a left-hand side setback of approximately 5 feet, 3 inches. The left-side setback would comply with the minimum per Code but result in a combined side setback of only 6 feet, 3 inches, deficient of the ten-foot combined side setback requirement.

SMC Section 19.48.040 requires that “a detached garage or other detached accessory structure” be “located either directly adjacent to the structure or at least five feet away from another accessory structure, accessory living unit or main building.” Compliance with this requirement and retention of the majority of the existing historic detached garage would afford a maximum of only 40 square feet of additional garage space; the resulting structure would total 372 square feet, or 28 square feet deficient of SMC 19.46.040 which mandates a minimum of 400 square-foot gross floor area for a two-car garage.

Few options exist to design an addition compatible with the existing architectural style of the home which simultaneously complies with Code requirement related to combined setback and in conformance with the minimum Code requirement of 5' minimum distance between structures. Even if the proposed addition were to be relocated two feet to the north and the exiting garage retained, a minimum combined side setback of ten feet still could not be achieved (Attachment 5).

FINDINGS

In order to approve the Variance, the following findings must be made:

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 of privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity and within the same zoning district.

The subject lot is 6,000 square feet in size, meeting the minimum Code requirement and consistent with other lots throughout the vicinity.

Siting options are constrained at the subject property. The applicant requests a variance from covered parking and combined setback requirements in order to construct a modest single-story addition to the rear of a Heritage Resource. The proposed addition would cause the gross floor area of the subject property to exceed 1,800 square feet, although the total number of bedrooms within the home would remain unchanged.

Any expansion of the detached garage to comply with current Code requirement related to covered parking would necessitate that the garage be widened minimally 1 foot, 6 inches and lengthened approximately 2 feet, 3 inches, thereby effectively requiring demolition and new construction; such would also result in reduction in distance between garage and proposed addition, and would detrimentally impact the property's historic character.

Should the detached garage be expanded to comply with Code, the minimum distance between the proposed addition and garage would no longer conform to current Code requirement and would necessitate that the historic entry wall connecting the home to the detached garage be removed. If the proposed addition were relocated to provide a minimum 9' side setback, the resulting architecture and livability of the home would be greatly compromised and exacerbate the deficiency in distance between the home and detached garage.

Alternatively, if the detached garage were to be expanded and/or relocated such that it were attached to the northerly wall of the home, the resulting turning radius between the home and garage entry would very likely become too severe to allow for parking of two vehicles within the garage. Further, any relocation of the garage closer to the rear property line would likely mandate the removal of a protected magnolia tree.

Modifying the building envelope or reducing the size of the proposed addition to comply with combined setback requirement would adversely impact the external appearance of the home and create an undesirable interior layout.

Staff anticipates that additional parking demand would not be generated by the proposed new living space and can therefore make the finding to support a variance from the covered parking requirements. The proposed design optimizes preservation of the historic integrity of the home, while providing a reasonable floor plan and achieving architecture consistent with the existing home and surrounding neighborhood pattern. Staff can make the findings to support request of a variance from combined setback requirements.

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.

The proposed single-story addition would not result in adverse privacy-related impacts to surrounding properties or negatively impact scenic views, as proposed windows are modest in size, and the maximum ridge height of approximately 15 feet would remain lower than that of the existing home.

Modification of the proposed addition and/or existing home to comply with combined setback or parking capacity requirements, or both, may prompt negative impacts to the existing home and garage design and adversely impact the historic character of the home. Located at the rear of the existing home, the addition would result in, at most, a minor visible change to the surrounding streetscape and no notable impact to the prevailing neighborhood pattern. Staff anticipates no detrimental consequence as a result of the proposed project.

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.

Approval of the project does not grant the applicant a special privilege. Most homes of original design within the vicinity of the subject property have single-car detached garages. The proposed addition will not add to the home's existing bedroom count, and is unlikely to generate parking demand in excess of that currently associated with the property. Further, the proposed addition is modest in size and is sensitive to the architecture of the existing home. The project would comply with SMC requirements related to front- and rear-yard setbacks, and would not reduce existing side-yard setbacks.

Architectural Evaluation Report: Any selective demolition, alteration, and rehabilitation of a historic structure must be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The following criteria have been analyzed with respect to this project:

1. "A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships."

Analysis: Proposed modifications to the home will not change the residential use of the heritage resource, and materials would conform with those of the existing home. The proposed addition and modifications to the interior of the structure would be completely or nearly invisible from the public right-of-way.

2. "The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided."

Analysis: The project conforms to this standard, as exterior modification would be confined to the rear of the home, and no alteration to architectural features would result. Alteration to the interior of the home would not be visible from the public right-of-way.

3. "Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken."

Analysis: The applicant does not introduce any new architectural elements to the home with addition of the proposed structure which would create a false sense of historical development. The proposed addition would be designed to be compatible with the existing home.

4. "Changes to the property that have acquired historical significance in their own right will be retained and preserved."

Analysis: No changes are proposed which would result in impairment of the historic character of the main building or its features.

5. “Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.”

Analysis: The proposal will incorporate features and construction materials consistent with the existing structure. Architectural form will be maintained with the proposed addition. Alterations to the home are confined to the rear, and the interior configuration of the majority of the existing home will be retained.

6. “Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.”

Analysis: The project does not involve the replacement of deteriorated original features; the project proposed involves an addition and modification to the interior of the existing home.

7. “Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.”

Analysis: No chemical or physical treatments are proposed in this project.

8. “Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.”

Analysis: Archeological resources are not evaluated in this report.

9. “New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.”

Analysis: The proposed addition will match the existing home in architectural style and character. The building will utilize a similar painted stucco and roof material to match the existing home. Design of new windows would differ from that of existing windows, distinguishing the addition from, but maintaining architectural compatibility with, the existing building (Attachment 5). At approximately 15 feet in height, the addition would be visually subordinate to the main structure while utilizing a similar gabled roof presentation.

10. “New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.”

Analysis: The essential form and integrity of the historic structure would be maintained if the interior of the home is reconfigured and the proposed addition constructed. The surrounding environment would remain entirely unchanged, aside from removal of surrounding landscaping to accommodate the proposed addition.

FISCAL IMPACT

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

PUBLIC CONTACT

As of the time of writing of this report, staff has received no correspondence related to the proposed

project.

Notice of Public Hearing	Staff Report	Agenda
• Published in the <i>Sun</i> Newspaper • Posted on Site • 51 notices mailed to the property owners and residents within 300 ft. of the project site	• Published on the City of Sunnyvale's website • Provided at the Reference Section of the City of Sunnyvale Public Library	• Posted on the City's official notice bulletin board • Published on the City of Sunnyvale's website

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A Class 3 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from CEQA provisions. Class 3 Categorical Exemptions include construction of minor additions to existing structures.

CONCLUSION

Findings: Staff was able to make the required Findings based on the justifications for the Resource Alteration Permit and Variance.

FISCAL IMPACT

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

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Resource Alteration Permit and request for Variance with attached conditions.
2. Approve the Resource Alteration Permit and request for Variance with modified conditions.
3. Approve the Resource Alteration Permit and deny the request for Variance, and direct staff regarding desired alternative design.
4. Deny the Resource Alteration Permit and deny the request for Variance, and direct staff regarding desired alternatives.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend Alternative 1 to the Heritage Preservation Commission: Approve the Resource Alteration Permit and request for Variance with Conditions of Approval found in Attachment 4.

Prepared by: Timothy Maier, Project Planner

Reviewed by: Amber El-Hajj, Senior Planner

Approved by: Trudi Ryan, Planning Officer

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity and Noticing Map
2. Project Data Table
3. Recommended Findings
4. Recommended Conditions of Approval
5. Site and Architectural Plans
6. Variance Justifications Form
7. Letter from the Applicant
8. Historical and Architectural Evaluation

