



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

File #: 15-0289, Version: 1

REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT

File #: 2014-7624

Location: 1026 Lois Avenue (APN: 198-34-011)

Zoning: R-0

Proposed Project:

DESIGN REVIEW to allow construction of a new two-story home with a total floor area of 2,993 square feet (2,566 square feet living area and a 427-square foot garage) resulting in 49.8% floor area ratio (FAR).

Applicant / Owner: BO Design (applicant) / Haiyan Gong (owner)

Environmental Review: A Class 1 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from California Environmental Quality Act provisions and City Guidelines.

Project Planner: Shétal Divatia, (408) 730-7637, sdivatia@sunnyvale.ca.gov

REPORT IN BRIEF

General Plan: Residential Low Density

Existing Site Conditions: Single-family residence

Surrounding Land Uses

North: Single-family residence

South: Single-family residence

East: Single-family residence

West: Single-family residence

Issues: Neighborhood compatibility, Floor Area Ratio

Staff Recommendation: Approve the Design Review subject to recommended Conditions of Approval.

BACKGROUND

A Design Review for a two-story home at 50% FAR at this site was considered and denied by the Planning Commission on October 13, 2014. The Commission noted that the proposed home with the high FAR had neighborhood compatibility issues and iterated that the code allows a two-story home in this zoning district. They recommended that the applicant redesign the proposal to address these issues (Meeting Minutes - Attachment 8).

The applicant has redesigned the proposal to address the Planning Commission and neighbors'

concerns. A discussion on the changes and the proposed home is included in the Site Plan and Architecture section of this report.

The City has not received a request for a one-story overlay for this neighborhood

Description of Proposed Project

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing single-story home at the site and construct a new two-story home, resulting in a total of 2,993 square feet and approximately 50% Floor Area Ratio (FAR). A Design Review is required for construction of a new home to evaluate compliance with development standards and with the Single Family Home Design Techniques. The Planning Commission is required to review such applications exceeding 45% FAR or 3,600 square feet. See Attachment 1 for a map of the vicinity and mailing area for notices, Attachment 2 for the Data Table of the project, and Attachment 6 for the proposed plans.

Previous Actions on the Site

The existing 1,182-square foot single-story home was constructed in 1953. The Planning Commission denied a Design Review for a two-story home with a 50% FAR project at this site in October 2014.

EXISTING POLICY

Single Family Home Design Techniques: The City's Single Family Home Design Techniques (2003) provide guidelines for site planning, architecture, and other design elements related to neighborhood compatibility. These guidelines are referenced in the discussion and analysis below.

DISCUSSION

Development Standards: The proposed project complies with all applicable development standards including setbacks and parking, as set forth in the Sunnyvale Municipal Code. The following items have been identified for clarification:

- Site Layout
The proposed home would be located near the center of the property meeting all setback requirements. A two-car garage and a driveway provides access at the right side of the property's frontage.
- Parking/Circulation
The project would provide a two-car garage meeting size and dimensional requirements as well as a two-car driveway in compliance with current parking standards.
- Landscaping and Tree Preservation
The applicant proposes to retain the majority of the site's existing landscaping. One protected tree and three smaller sized trees are proposed to be removed in conjunction with this project. The protected tree in the front yard is proposed to be removed, as it is very close to the new structure and its health and structure will be compromised. A 36-inch box size replacement tree is recommended to be planted in the front yard (Condition of Approval PS-1).
- 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% of the roof of any structure on a nearby property. The project plans demonstrate that the shading would comply with this requirement.

Site Plan and Architecture: The existing home at the site can be categorized as a typical ranch-styled home with a recessed entryway, stucco façade, and hip roof design with composition shingle roofing. The majority of homes in the immediate neighborhood have a similar architectural style and use of materials. The proposed home is a contemporary style of the ranch architectural design with use of hip roof form, window trims and stucco finish (Attachment 6 - Site and Architectural Plans). The front elevation includes an entry feature and a stone base along the entire frontage. The height of the entry feature is about 4 inches higher than the adjacent roof eaves. Proposed plate height for the first floor is 10 feet throughout and 9 feet for the second story. Side elevations include clerestory windows and a stair well window at the second story level.

Modifications from Previous Proposal: The proposed plans have been modified from its previous design that was considered and denied by the Planning Commission. The modifications include:

- Removed double story ceiling height in the living area (to decrease volume and mass of structure);
- Removed balcony feature that impacted neighbor privacy;
- Relocated bedroom on second story to eliminate a bedroom window on the side (to address neighbor's privacy);
- Decreased height of entry element (10' feet as compared to 12'6");
- Increased second story side setback on the left side (19'9" from 10'8");
- Increased second story front setback (27'2"-31'3" as compared to 27'5");
- Smaller second story floor area (777 s.f. as compared to 854 s.f.);
- Larger first floor area (2,216 s.f. as compared to 2,142 s.f.);
- Reduced the second story to first story floor area ratio (35% as compared to 39.8%);
- Changed roofing material to flat grey colored concrete tile (for compatibility with ranch style) instead of terracotta barrel style tile (indicative of Spanish/Mission style architecture)
- As conditioned, a lower plate height for second story (8' instead of 9')

The redesigned home attempts to address issues noted at by the Planning Commission. The lowered height of the entry feature makes it more compatible with the recessed entryways typical of ranch styled homes and the use of concrete flat grey colored tiles improves its compatibility with shake/shingle roof material found in the neighborhood. The smaller second story floor area allows for increased front and side setbacks to address privacy and bulk issues. A low pitch hip roof design combined with flat roof tiles is being proposed, which is similar to roofs in the neighborhood. Staff has included a Condition of Approval requiring that the second story plate height be lowered to 8 feet from 9 feet to help reduce the visual appearance of the second story.

Second Floor Area to First Floor Area Ratio: The Single Family Design Techniques note that for the purposes of assessing neighborhood character and scale, the "neighborhood" is defined as both sides of the street within the same and immediately adjacent blocks. Section 3.4.A states: *"The area of the second floor should not exceed the common standard of the neighborhood. For new second stories in predominantly one-story neighborhoods, the second floor area should not exceed 35% of the first floor area (including garage area)."* The neighborhood for this site is composed of predominantly single-story homes. The proposed two-story home complies with this guideline by

having a second floor area of 777 square feet, which is 35% of the first floor area (2,216 s.f.).

Floor Area Ratio: The proposed 2,993 square foot single family home at 49.8% FAR exceeds the 45% FAR threshold and requires Planning Commission approval. The 5% FAR translates to 293 square feet of floor area. The neighborhood is composed of mostly single-story homes with a few two-story homes with FARs ranging between 19% and 49% (Attachment 3 - Neighborhood Floor Area Ratio Table). The house at 1058 Lois Avenue (approximately 7 homes away) is about 48% FAR. There are few other two-story homes in this area; all of which have FARs less than 45%.

Privacy Impact: When not required for egress purposes, the proposed second story windows are reduced in size to be clerestory windows. Based on setbacks, location and size, the second story windows are not expected to have privacy impacts on adjacent neighbors. The proposed plans also do not include any balcony features that can impact neighborhood privacy.

Neighborhood Compatibility: The neighborhood is predominantly one-story homes with a few two-story homes sprinkled throughout. The proposed two-story home addresses neighbor privacy, solar access requirements, and architectural design compatibility. Staff finds that the redesigned two-story home adequately addresses privacy and bulk issues associated with higher FAR projects.

Environmental Review: A Class 1 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from California Environmental Quality Act provisions and City Guidelines.

CONCLUSION

Findings and General Plan Goals: Staff is recommending approval of the Design Review subject to recommended conditions of approval as noted in the Findings (Attachment 4).

FISCAL IMPACT

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

PUBLIC CONTACT

As of the date of staff report preparation, staff has received several comments from the neighbors noting concern and recommending denial for the proposed two-story home (Attachment 7).

Notice of Public Hearing, Staff Report and Agenda

- Published in the *Sun* newspaper
- Posted on the site
- 99 notices mailed to property owners and residents within 300 feet of the project site
- Posted on the City of Sunnyvale's Web site
- Provided at the Reference Section of the City of Sunnyvale's Public Library
- Posted on the City's official notice bulletin board
- Posted on the City of Sunnyvale's Web site

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Design Review subject to recommended Conditions of Approval.
2. Approve the Design Review with modified Conditions of Approval.
3. Deny the Design Review.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend Alternative 1 to approve the Design Review.

Prepared by: Shétal Divatia, Senior Planner

Reviewed by: Ryan Kuchenig, Senior Planner

Approved by: Trudi Ryan, Planning Officer

Attachments:

1. Vicinity Map
2. Project Data Table
3. Neighborhood Floor Area Ratio Table
4. Recommended Findings
5. Recommended Conditions of Approval
6. Site and Architectural Plans
7. Letters from Neighbors
8. Minutes of Planning Commission Public Hearing (10/13/2014)