



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

File #: 15-0580, 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) for review and approval by the Planning Commission.

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 49.8% FAR at this site was considered and approved by the Planning Commission on March 9, 2015 (PC Meeting Minutes - Attachment 7). This decision of the Planning Commission was appealed to the City Council and was considered at its May 12, 2015, public hearing. The Council referred this item back to the Planning Commission with a list of issues to address (City Council Meeting Minutes - Attachment 8).

The issues were:

1. Height of the first and second story and clarity of Condition of Approval PS-2 (height of first-

- story eaves);
2. Height of the first floor kitchen window, how it relates to sight lines and whether or not a taller fence might be appropriate;
 3. Location of the air conditioners; and,
 4. Design of second story stairwell element.

In response to the above noted issues and other comments expressed at the public hearings, the applicant has modified and resubmitted their plans (Project Plans - Attachment 10). Additional information on the modifications is located in the project proposal section of the report.

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 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 10 for proposed plans.

Previous Actions on the Site

- The Planning Commission reviewed a prior design on October 13, 2014, and denied the project (PC Minutes - Attachment 6). At that hearing, the Commission noted that the Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC) allows a two-story home in this zoning district, but concluded the proposed design had neighborhood compatibility issues, and recommended that the applicant redesign the proposal to address these issues.
- The Planning Commission reviewed and approved a modified design subject to modified conditions of approval that included additional clarifications and modifications on March 9, 2015.
- The Planning Commission approval was appealed by a neighbor (Jeanne Waldman) on behalf of some neighbors on March 23, 2015.
- City Council heard the appeal on May 12, 2015, and discussed the project with the two story element, FAR and privacy issues, and directed that the project be sent back to the Planning Commission for review and provided direction to address specific issues.

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.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A Class 1 Categorical Exemption (Guideline 15301) relieves this project from California Environmental Quality Act provisions and City Guidelines.

DISCUSSION

Development Standards: The proposed project complies with all applicable development standards including setbacks and parking, as set forth in the Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC). The following items are noted for clarification:

- Site Layout

The proposed home would be located near the center of the property meeting all setback requirements. A two-car garage with driveway provides access at the right side of the property's frontage.

- Parking/Circulation

The project would provide the required four on-site parking spaces (two enclosed spaces in the garage and two unenclosed spaces in the driveway) that meet the size and dimensional requirements to comply 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 (in fair health as noted by an arborist) is proposed to be removed, as it is very close to the new structure and its health and structure will be compromised. Planning Commission previously required two 36-inch box size replacement trees to be planted on the site with one tree in the front yard and the driveway to be constructed with pervious material. These design features are included in the modified site plan and reflected in 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 percent 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 10 - 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 four inches higher than the adjacent roof eaves. Proposed plate height for the first floor is nine feet and eight feet for the second story. Side elevations include clerestory windows and the rear elevation includes two second floor bedroom windows overlooking the rear yard and a clerestory window on the stairwell.

Modifications from Previous Proposal: The plans have been modified from the design considered by the Planning Commission and City Council on March 9, 2015 and May 12, 2015. These modifications are presented to address the Planning Commission and City Council actions and to respond to other issues and concerns expressed at the City Council hearing to improve the project's neighborhood compatibility.

The modifications and clarifications are as follows:

- Plate Heights and Eave heights. First floor plate height of 9 feet resulting in an overall height

- of the structure of 23'4";
- Air Conditioners. Relocated air conditioners from the side yard to the rear yard;
- Stairwell. Modified the design of the stairwell including:
 - Lowered the wall height and reduced the size of the stairwell extension which increases the second story side yard setback to 13'9" from 10'7" feet;
 - Redesigned roof form above stairwell to a shed roof resulting in a lower roof form above this element;
 - Removal of stairwell window in the side yard and reducing window size on either side of the stairwell and replacing with clerestory windows as compared to three regular sized windows in the earlier proposal
- Replacement Trees. Located the two required 36" box sized replacement trees (one in the front yard and one in the rear yard)
- Garage Door. Changed garage door design style for improved compatibility with ranch architectural style (Change proposed by applicant).

Response to City Council Directives:

1. Height of the first and second story and clarity of Condition of Approval PS-2 (height of first-story eaves): The plans reflect a first floor plate height of 9 feet and the second floor plate height of 8 feet. Condition of Approval PS-2 has been deleted and a new condition (BP-6) has been added to reflect the maximum floor plate and eave heights. Staff finds that this direction has been addressed.
2. Height of the first floor kitchen window, how it relates to sight lines and whether or not a taller fence might be appropriate: - The applicant has provided section drawing (Sheet A-6 - Attachment 10) to illustrate first floor window placement of the proposed structure with respect to existing windows on the neighboring properties on either side. The kitchen window placement shown in the section would not be in direct line of sight of the neighboring property at 1030 Lois Avenue. This section illustrates a six foot tall person's sight lines from the kitchen window would be blocked by the existing 7'10" fence between the properties thereby maintaining privacy. Staff finds that this concern has been addressed.
3. Location of the air conditioners: The previous proposal located the air conditioners in the side yard, within 7 feet of the neighboring property's windows. The units have been moved to the rear yard on the left side of the house. The air conditioners meet setback requirements and will be required to conform to Sunnyvale's noise regulations (Noise level cannot exceed 50dBA at the property lines at night or 60 dBA during daytime hours). Staff finds that the revised location provides better separation between the units and living areas of the adjacent house. The applicant should select an air conditioning unit that will meet the city's noise regulations.
4. Design of second story stairwell element Examine other possibilities to reduce second story roof height above stairwell. - The project has been modified to reduce the roof height of the stair well element as noted in the elevations (Sheet A-3 - Attachment 10). This modification with the shed roof has reduced the height of the stairwell edge by approximately a foot and a half. Staff finds that the redesign provides a noticeable reduction in the appearance of bulk and addresses the design concerns.

Staff finds that the other modifications to the project (design of the garage door and the siting of replacement trees) also address concerns expressed at prior public hearings.

FISCAL IMPACT

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

PUBLIC CONTACT

Notice of Planning Commission Public Hearing, Staff Report and Agenda

- 99 notices mailed to property owners and residents within 300 feet of the project site
- Notice provided in the *Sun* newspaper.
- Posted on 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

FINDINGS AND GENERAL PLAN GOALS

Staff is able to make the Findings located in Attachment 4.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Design Review, subject to recommended Conditions of Approval (Attachment 5).
2. Approve the Design Review, subject to modified Conditions of Approval.
3. Deny the Design Review.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Approve the Design Review, subject to recommended Conditions of Approval (Attachment 5).

Prepared by: Shétal Divatia, Senior Planner
Reviewed by: Geri Caruso, Principal Planner
Reviewed by: Trudi Ryan, Planning Officer

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity and Noticing Map
2. Project Data Table
3. Floor Area Ratio Table
4. Recommended Findings
5. Recommended Conditions of Approval
6. Planning Commission Minutes of 10/13/2014
7. Planning Commission Minutes of 3/9/2015
8. City Council Minutes of 5/12/2015
9. Appeal Letter 3/23/2015
10. Site and Architectural Plans