



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT

File #: 2015-7343

Location: 619 Dunholme Way (APN: 309-16-006)

Zoning: R0

Proposed Project:

DESIGN REVIEW for a new two-story single-family home with a total of 4,761 sq. ft. (4,201 sq. ft. living area, 560 sq. ft. garage) with a 49% Floor Area Ratio (FAR).

Applicant / Owner: Lazari Designs (applicant) / Philip Rothenberg (owner)

Environmental Review: A Class 3a 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: Building height, neighborhood compatibility and Floor Area Ratio

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

BACKGROUND

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing single-story home on the 9,710 s.f. lot and construct a new, two-story single-family home, resulting in a total of 4,761 square feet at 49% 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 project Data Table, and Attachment 6 for the proposed plans.

Previous Actions on the Site

The existing 1,160-square foot single-story home was constructed in 1950. There have been no other subsequent planning actions for this site.

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 noted for clarification:

- **Site Layout:** The proposed home would be located near the center of the property meeting/exceeding all setback requirements. A two-car garage and a driveway will provide access at the left side of the property's frontage.
- **Lot Coverage:** The proposal results in 39.9% lot coverage and meets the maximum 40% allowed for two-story homes.
- **Parking/Circulation:** The project provides a two-car garage meeting size and dimensional requirements as well as a two-car driveway in compliance with current parking standards. The site, currently served by two curbs cuts and a circular driveway will be modified to current City standards of one curb cut.
- **Landscaping and Tree Preservation:** The existing site does not contain any mature trees or trees considered protected by City code. The proposed conceptual landscape plan includes plantings including shrubs and trees.
- **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.

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.

Site Plan and Architecture: The existing home at the site can be categorized as a typical ranch-styled home served by a carport. The gravel driveway is indicative of older standards not commonly found in Sunnyvale. The majority of homes in the immediate neighborhood have a mixed architectural style and use of materials.

The proposed home is of a Spanish styled architecture with use of an arched entryway, stucco exterior, clay tiles and a balcony with metal railing (Attachment 6 - Site and Architectural Plans). The front elevation includes an entry feature and a stone base along the entire frontage that wraps around the sides up to side fences.

Heights: The proposed plate height for the first floor is 10 feet and 9 feet for the second story (*plate height is measured from finished floor to ceiling*). The height of the proposed residence will be 28'9" measured from the top-of-curb to top-of-ridge. This height is less than that of the house on the adjacent house (approved in 2009) on the west which is 29'6" tall.

A majority of the homes in this neighborhood have 8-foot plate heights and some recent home additions and new homes have 9-foot first story plate heights. The two-story residence on the west has 9-foot plate heights for the first and second story. The one-story residence on the east has 8-foot plate height. The proposed plate height will result in a higher first story eave height as compared to those of the adjacent neighbors.

Staff is concerned about the proposed tall plate heights that increase the total height of the structure. The review criteria of the Single Family Design Techniques requires staff to compare the heights of first and second floor eaves compared to adjacent homes.

3.5 E. Keep first floor and second floor eave heights at the same general height as adjacent homes to minimize the visual bulk of the new construction. The recent desire for taller interior ceiling heights should be achieved through interior open spaces or cathedral ceilings, rather than taller exterior walls and higher eave heights, unless taller heights are consistent with adjacent homes.

By practice, staff discourages first floor plate heights over 9 feet unless a project is on a large lot (>9,000 s.f.) and is located in a large lot neighborhood with more area between homes. Staff has included a condition of approval PS-1 to lower the first floor plate height to 9 feet from finished floor (2 feet from top-of-curb) and to lower the second story plate height to 8 feet (Attachment PS-1 COAs). Note that there is also an additional 1 foot of space between the floors. These recommended changes would reduce the height of the structure by 2 feet for an overall building height to 26'6 from top-of-curb for greater compatibility with the neighborhood.

Second Floor Area to First Floor Area Ratio: The neighborhood for this site is composed of one and two-story homes. The proposed first floor to second story ratio is 57.3%. This ratio is similar to other two-story homes in this neighborhood. Since this neighborhood is not a predominantly one-story single-family homes, the 35% second floor to first floor ratio design guideline is not applicable.

Floor Area Ratio: The proposed 4,761 square foot single family home at 49% FAR exceeds the 45% FAR review threshold and requires Planning Commission approval. The difference between 45% and 49%FAR in this project is 388 square feet of floor area. The neighborhood is composed of one and two-story single family homes with an average FAR of 30%.

For the purposes of assessing neighborhood character and scale for implementation of the design techniques, a neighborhood is defined as both block faces within the same and immediately adjacent block (on the same street). When trying to find similarly sized homes near the project staff identified a two-story home addition around the block at 610 Dorset Way that was approved with a 54.4% FAR in 2012. When looking at a larger context this neighborhood (area approximately within the 300 feet radius of the site) has a range of 14-54% FARs (Attachment 3 - Neighborhood Floor Area Ratio Table).

Privacy Impact: When not required for egress purposes, the proposed second story windows (except one window on the east/right side elevation) are reduced in size to be clerestory windows with 5'3" sill height. Staff has included a Condition of Approval (No. PS-1) requiring this remaining larger window be reduced like the other high-sill clerestory windows. Although second story balconies in front and rear yards are a common feature in the immediate neighborhood, staff is concerned

about the proposed balcony on the front façade that overlooks the side and rear yard of the residence located across Dunholme Way. If the Planning Commission shares this concern, this balcony feature can be removed and replaced by an architectural feature such as an arched window with or without a shallow balcony railing (Juliet balcony).

Neighborhood Compatibility: The neighborhood has one and two-story homes. Newer two-story homes are similar in scale and height as the proposed two-story home that as conditioned, addresses neighbor privacy, solar access requirements, scale and architectural design compatibility. Staff finds that the proposed two-story home, subject to recommended Conditions of Approval adequately addresses privacy and bulk issues associated with higher FAR projects.

Environmental Review: A Class 3a Categorical Exemption relieves this project from California Environmental Quality Act provisions and City Guidelines. Class 3a covers ... (describe from CEQA manual)

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 no comments from the neighbors.

Notice of Public Hearing, Staff Report and Agenda

- Published in the *Sun* newspaper
- Posted on the site
- 56 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 subject to recommended Conditions of Approval.

Prepared by: Shétal Divatia, Senior Planner
Approved by: Gerri Caruso, Principal Planner

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