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File #: 16-0039, Version: 1

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### **REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION**

#### **SUBJECT**

**File #:** 2015-7717

**Location:** 897 Markham Ter. (APN: 165-46-068)

**Zoning:** R-1.7/PD (Low Medium Density Residential / Planned Development) Zoning District

**Proposed Project:**

**SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT** for a first floor addition of 164 square feet to the rear of an existing two-story home, resulting in 2,189 square feet (1,781 square foot living area and 408 square foot garage) and 55.8% Floor Area Ratio (FAR).

**Applicant / Owners:** Loching Keng Trustee

**Environmental Review:** Categorically Exempt Class 1

**Project Planner:** Noren Caliva-Lepe, (408) 730-7659, [ncaliva-lepe@sunnyvale.ca.gov](mailto:ncaliva-lepe@sunnyvale.ca.gov)

#### **REPORT IN BRIEF**

**General Plan:** Residential Low Medium Density (7-14 du/ac)

**Existing Site Conditions:** Single-family home

**Surrounding Land Uses**

**North:** Single-family home

**South:** Single-family home

**East:** Single-family home

**West:** Single-family home

**Issues:** Neighborhood compatibility and Floor Area Ratio

**Staff Recommendation:** Approve the Special Development Permit with recommended conditions

#### **BACKGROUND**

The existing two-story, single-family home was constructed in 1993 as part of the former Benner School site development by SummerHill Homes. The existing home is approximately 2,025 square feet with a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of approximately 51.6%. There are no previous planning applications related to the property.

The Benner School site development is made up of 105 single-family homes, with an average lot size of approximately 3,735 square feet and overall FAR of approximately 50%. Since the original construction of the homes, ten SDPs have been granted for additions that have resulted in FARs that range from 53.3% up to 63.1%.

**Special Development Permit (SDP):** The property is located within the R-1.7/PD zoning district. The R-1.7/PD zoning district allows for small lots ranging in size from 2,600 square feet to 4,000 square feet. The R-1.7 zoning district is always combined with a PD zoning district to allow for consideration of deviations from specific development standards, such as lot coverage, parking, setbacks, height, and FAR. Such deviations may be approved through an SDP if the project attains the objectives of the General Plan and does not impair adjacent properties (see findings in Attachment 3).

The applicant is requesting an addition which exceeds the 50% FAR limitations allowed in the R1.7/PD zoning district. All other development standards, such as parking, lot coverage, and setbacks comply (see project data in Attachment 2).

**Description of Proposed Project:** The existing home is on a land-locked property, surrounded by other properties on all sides and with no street frontage. Access to the Markham Terrace frontage is through an existing easement over the adjacent property along the east property line. The existing home contains three bedrooms and two full bathrooms on the second floor, and a half bathroom on the first floor.

The proposed project is for a 164 square foot first floor addition to the rear of the existing two-story home, resulting in 2,189 square feet and 55.8% Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The addition will convert an existing family room into a fourth bedroom, expand a half bathroom into a full bathroom, expand the kitchen, and move the laundry facility from the garage into the home. There are no changes proposed to the second story (see plans in Attachment 7). See Attachment 1 for a map of the vicinity and mailing area for notices.

## **DISCUSSION**

**Architecture:** The existing home is similar to the other homes in the development with stucco exterior, wood trim and composition shingle roofing material. As proposed, the rear addition will match the existing exterior colors, materials and architectural style. No modifications are proposed to the existing second floor or to the front of the home.

**Applicable Design Guidelines and Policy Documents:** The proposed addition is consistent with the adopted Single Family Home Design Techniques as it generally maintains the existing shape, form of homes in the neighborhood and is not visible from the streetscape along Markham Terrace. As a one-story addition to the rear of the home, the privacy impacts are minimal (see findings in Attachment 3).

**Development Standards:** The proposed project complies with most of the applicable development standards, such as setbacks, parking and lot coverage. A deviation is proposed for FAR. The following items have been noted for clarification:

**Setbacks:** The existing first floor was approved with a 4 foot 2 inch right side yard setback and 6 foot left side yard setback. The proposed addition maintains the existing side yard setbacks. The existing rear yard setback is approximately 16 feet 5 inches. The proposed addition would extend the entire back wall along the first floor to the 14 foot 5 inch rear yard setback line. The proposed setbacks are in compliance with the setback requirements in the zoning district (see project data in Attachment 2).

**Parking:** The existing two-car garage and two-car driveway will be maintained. The property complies with the single-family home parking requirements and no additional parking is required.

**Lot Coverage:** The proposed addition results in 37.4% lot coverage, which is below the 40% maximum allowed in the zoning district.

**FAR:** The Benner School site development was originally approved in 1993 as a small lot subdivision, which offered a relatively affordable single-family detached home option at the time. The average lot size found in the development is approximately 3,735 square feet. Five different floor plans were provided, ranging from two to four bedrooms. The overall FAR for the development was approved at approximately 50%. Since the original approval, the definition of FAR has changed and now double-counts vaulted ceiling areas exceeding 15 feet in height. Based on the current FAR definition, the overall FAR for the original development is approximately 51%. The existing home was originally approved with a 49% FAR. Based on the new method of calculating FAR, the existing FAR is 51.6%.

Interest in expanding the home sizes in the development increase as families grow and homeowners needs change. Ten SDPs have been approved in the development area for bedroom additions for units with original two and three bedroom floor plans. These include FARs that range from 53.3% to 63.1%. Several of the approved additions were to create additional bedrooms within the vaulted ceiling areas, while others added bedrooms to the first floor at the back of the home (see FAR information in Attachment 6).

The proposed project will increase the FAR for the property from 51.6% to 55.8% and will create a bedroom on the first floor, resulting in a total of four bedrooms. The proposed project FAR is within the range in the development and is consistent with the established precedent in the development. FAR is used as a measurement of bulk and mass, and while there is an increase in FAR with the addition, the additional FAR will not have a negative impact on the surrounding properties because the proposed addition is tucked towards the back of the home, single-story, and not visible from the street frontage. Therefore, staff finds that the proposed project meets the intent of the PD combining district and complies with the required SDP findings.

**Neighborhood Impacts:** Staff finds that the location of the addition in the rear of the property does not create a visual impact to the surrounding properties and street frontage.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

A Categorical Exemption Class 1 (minor alterations to existing structure) relieves this project from CEQA provisions.

### **CONCLUSION**

Findings and General Plan Goals: Staff was able to make the required Findings based on the justifications for the Design Review and Special Development Permit and Recommended Conditions of Approval (Attachment 4). Recommended Findings and General Plan Goals are located in Attachment 3.

**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. The

applicant has submitted an approval letter from the neighborhood's Architectural Control Committee/Board of Directors (Attachment 5).

**Notice of Public Hearing, Staff Report and Agenda:**

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

**ALTERNATIVES**

1. Approve the Special Development Permit with the conditions in Attachment 4.
2. Approve the Special Development Permit with modified conditions.
3. Deny the Special Development Permit and provide direction to staff and the applicant where changes should be made.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Alternative 1: Approve the Special Development Permit with the Conditions of Approval in Attachment 4.

Prepared by: Noren Caliva-Lepe, Associate Planner

Reviewed by: Gerri Caruso, Principal Planner

Approved by: Andrew Miner, Acting Planning Officer

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Vicinity and Noticing Map
2. Project Data Table
3. Recommended Findings
4. Recommended Conditions of Approval
5. Approval Letter from Somerset of Sunnyvale
6. FAR Comparison
7. Site and Architectural Plans