



# City of Sunnyvale

## Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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File #: 16-0892, Version: 1

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### REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

#### SUBJECT

**File #:** 2016-7188

**Location:** 1454 Hampton Drive (APN: 313-13-021)

**Zoning:** R-0

**Proposed Project:** Appeal by the applicant of a decision by the Director of Community Development to deny a Design Review Permit application for a first-floor addition of 1,734 square feet to an existing one-story single-family residence, resulting in 2,856 square feet (2,347 square feet living area and 509 square feet garage) and 40.4 percent Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The project proposes a two-car tandem parking garage.

**Applicant / Owner:** MAC Design (applicant) / Timothy Vierra (owner)

**Environmental Review:** Categorically exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guideline Section 15301.

**Project Planner:** Aastha Vashist, (408) 730-7458, avashist@sunnyvale.ca.gov

#### REPORT IN BRIEF

**General Plan:** Residential Low Density

**Existing Site Conditions:** One-Story Single Family Residence

#### **Surrounding Land Uses**

**North:** One-Story Single Family Residence

**South:** One-Story Single Family Residence

**East:** One-Story Single Family Residence

**West:** One-Story Single Family Residence

**Issues:** Tandem parking garage

**Staff Recommendation:** *Deny the appeal and upheld the decision of the Director of Community Development Department to deny the Design Review Permit. If the Planning Commission decides to grant the appeal and approve the Design Review permit, the recommended Conditions of Approval are included in the Attachment 4.*

#### BACKGROUND

On August 10<sup>th</sup> 2016, an appeal was filed by the applicant, MAC Design, requesting the Planning Commission to rescind the Director of Community Development's decision to deny a Design Review Permit. The Permit was denied on the grounds that the staff was unable to make the required findings to allow a tandem parking garage for the proposed project, pursuant Sunnyvale Municipal

Code (SMC) Section 19.46.050.

The project site is located mid-block on the east side of Hampton Drive between Elizabeth Way and Marion Way. The project includes a first-floor addition of 1,734 square feet to an existing one-story single-family residence. A Design Review permit is required for the construction of an addition to evaluate compliance with development standards and Single Family Home Design Techniques. The project was reviewed at the staff level as the project proposes gross floor area of 2,856 square feet with 40.4 percent FAR; single-family home projects with less than or equal to 45 percent FAR or 3,600 square gross floor area feet are reviewed administratively by the staff.

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

### **Previous Actions on the Site**

A Trees Removal Permit (#2006-0289) for an Oak tree on the left corner of the front yard was previously denied by the staff in year 2006. However, no trees are proposed to be removed as part of this permit.

### **Appeal**

The applicant submitted an appeal, contesting the decision by the Director of Community Development denying the Design Review application. The appellant sites the following issues:

- Increasing the single car garage to a conventional two-car garage creates a long narrow entry way and pushes the living room back next to the family room. It eliminates any windows in the living area, which does not meet the code requirement, and requires the addition of an operable skylight, which adds to the construction cost.
- Providing a conventional two car garage increase the visual prominence of the garage.
- Providing a side by side car garage as compared to tandem parking garage generates an additional expense of \$85,000.

The appeal letter is included in the Attachment 5. The issues raised in the appeal letter are discussed in the next section of the report.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Architecture and Site Layout**

The existing single-story residence with one-car garage was constructed at an angle to the rectilinear interior lot. The surrounding neighborhood is predominantly one story single family residences with tract ranch-style architectural style and simple rectilinear forms. The existing home has ranch-style characteristics with gable roofs, recessed entry, repeated window forms, sliding windows and features horizontal exterior wooden siding. Refer to the Sheet A3 of the Attachment 8 for the existing floor plan and elevations.

The proposed addition would extend 40 feet from the rear facade of the existing home and contain a 1,734 square foot area that includes an expanded garage, two new bedrooms, a family room, laundry room, kitchen, and a covered patio. The first floor addition would be compatible with the design of the existing house with the same roof style and pitch. No tree removals are proposed. The architectural style and exterior finishes of the house with the proposed addition are compatible with that of the

existing house and the neighborhood.

In addition, exterior modifications are proposed by the applicant that includes replacement of windows, addition of wood clad beams, and columns and posts to the new entry and the rear porch, replacement of the exterior horizontal siding with stucco, and a new roof with composite shingle finish. The staff finds the proposed modifications and building materials to be compatible with the character of the existing structure and adjacent buildings.

### **Parking**

The existing single family residence has two bedrooms and a 266 square feet one-car garage. The addition of the proposed 1,341 square feet living area (excluding garage) with two new bedrooms will result in total living area of 2,164 square feet with four bedrooms. Pursuant to SMC Section 19.46.050, two covered parking spaces shall be provided if an alteration or addition to the dwelling results in four or more bedrooms, or a gross floor area of 1,800 square feet or more, excluding garages and carports. Since the proposed addition will result in gross floor area of over 1,800 square feet (excluding the garage) and four bedrooms, two covered parking spaces must be provided on the property. This parking must meet setback requirements and minimum dimensions.

City of Sunnyvale parking standards were amended to allow staff to consider a two-car tandem parking design in-lieu of two side-by-side covered parking spaces for a single-family home. The code requires compliance with at least one of two criteria to consider tandem parking:

*Without a variance, an approving authority, as part of any discretionary permit or, if no discretionary permit would be otherwise required, a miscellaneous plan permit, may allow a tandem parking garage or carport to satisfy the two covered space requirement if the approving authority makes one or more of the following findings:*

- (A) The width of the subject lot is less than fifty-seven feet; or*
- (B) Significant structural modifications are required to expand the existing covered parking area into the living area to meet the minimum size and dimensions for two covered spaces.*

The proposed 509 square feet tandem parking garage with 9'-10" width and 42'-1" depth, meets the minimum required area and dimension for a tandem parking garage (400 square feet area and minimum interior dimension of 8'-6" width by 36' depth). However, the staff is unable to make either of the two required findings to allow tandem parking garage for the project because the lot is 57 feet wide and the structural changes required to expand the existing covered parking does not result in a significant structural hardship. The findings are included in the Attachment 3.

The following are staff's responses on the issues raised by the applicant in the appeal letter:

- *Increasing the single car garage to a conventional two-car garage creates a long narrow entry way and pushes the living room back next to the family room. It eliminates any windows in the living area, which does not meet the code requirement, and requires addition of an operable skylight, which adds to the construction cost.*

Based on the alternative design provided by the applicant with a regular two-car garage (see Attachment 9), the living area will be approximately 510 square feet. Per 2013 California Residential Code Section R303.1, a minimum of 8 percent of the floor area (41 square feet) should be provided

for natural light and a minimum of 4 percent (20.5 square feet) for natural ventilation. Therefore, the code requirement can be met by providing window/windows with a minimum area of 41 square feet window for natural light with a minimum 20.5 square feet operable area for natural ventilation. Alternatively, skylights can be provided for natural light and ventilations. The staff finds that this can be achieved without any structural modifications as the applicant is proposing a new roof for the entire house, which also covers the parts of the existing house that are proposed to be retained.

- *Providing a conventional two car garage increases the visual prominence of the garage.*

Sunnyvale Single Family Home Design Techniques recommend against locating garages forward of other habitable portions of the house unless that is the predominant pattern in the neighborhood. However, the existing one-car garage is located forward of the rest of the house and the tandem garage is also proposed at the same location. A number of other properties within the neighborhood have garages located in the front of the house. Therefore, providing a two car garage will not substantially increase the visual prominence of the garage. The City's Design Techniques further include design techniques to reduce the visual prominence of garages by dividing the opening of the two car garage to provide one door for each vehicle, or by recessing garage doors from the face of the walls. The staff believes that application of these design techniques can help in emphasizing the home entry and minimizing the visual prominence of the garage door.

- *Providing a side by side car garage as compared to tandem parking garage generates an additional expense of \$85,000.*

Per Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC) without a variance, a tandem parking garage or carport may be allowed to satisfy the two covered space requirement if the width of the subject lot is less than 57 feet or significant structural modifications are required to expand the existing covered parking area into the living area to meet the minimum size and dimensions for two covered spaces.

The subject lot is 57 feet wide and, therefore, does not meet the first criteria to allow tandem parking garage.

Considering the scale of the proposed addition and other structural modifications to be made to the existing residence, structural changes required to expand the existing covered parking area into the living area do not result in significant structural hardship. The staff analysis for the tandem parking included evaluation by Building Safety Division to evaluate structural issues with the proposal. The applicant proposes an addition of 1,734 square feet to the existing one-story single family residence, which is roughly one-and-a-half time of the existing 1,089 square feet gross floor area. In addition, the proposed project involves substantial structural modifications to the existing house including re-roofing the existing house. The difference between the structural work required for the proposed tandem parking and conventional two-car garage is not significant.

Based on the applicant's estimate, constructing a conventional two-car garage costs more compared to tandem parking garage. The findings for Tandem parking do not require a review of economic factors. Staff is unable to make the required findings to support a tandem parking garage for the property.

See Attachment 3 for the recommended findings for the tandem parking garage.

### **Applicable Design Guidelines**

The proposed project is consistent with the adopted Single-Family Design Techniques since the proposed design is compatible with the existing form and scale of the house. Staff has included findings for the Single-Family Design Techniques in Attachment 3.

### **Floor Area and Floor Area Ratio**

The immediate neighborhood is predominantly one-story homes with FARs ranging between 10 percent and 60 percent, with an average of 24 percent and gross floor areas ranging from 1,016 square feet to 4,989 square feet with an average of 1,851 square feet (Attachment 7). The existing home is at 15.9 percent FAR with 1,222 square feet floor area. The applicant's request for 40.4 percent FAR is less than another existing one-story residence in the neighborhood at 1418 Hampton Drive with 45 percent FAR. The existing two-story residences located in R-1 zoning district along Ramon Drive have FARs exceeding 45 percent. The proposed home at 2,856 square feet minimizes bulk and mass by locating the addition to the rear and maintaining the existing 8 feet plate height. Therefore, the staff finds that the first floor addition to the applicant's home would not have a negative impact on the adjacent properties.

### **Development Standards**

The proposed project complies with the applicable development standards as set forth in the Sunnyvale Municipal Code, such as lot coverage, parking, height, and setbacks. The Project Data Table is located in Attachment 2. As previously mentioned, the staff was not able to make the required findings for allowing the tandem parking garage.

### **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 first-story addition will have no impact on the solar access for nearby properties.

### **Neighborhood Impacts**

The proposed structure is not expected to have a detrimental visual or privacy impact on the surrounding properties as the design is compatible with the existing structure and the proposed one-story addition is located away from the street towards the rear of the property with side and rear setbacks exceeding the minimum requirement.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The proposed project is categorically exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guideline Section 15301 as it involves addition to an existing single-family residence resulting in an addition of less than 2,500 square feet (1,810 square feet).

### **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**

- Published in the Sun newspaper

- Posted on the site
- 68 notices mailed to property owners and residents within 300 feet of the project site
- Provided at the Reference Section of the City's Public Library
- Posted on the City's website

### **Agenda**

- Posted on the City's official notice bulletin board
- Posted on the City's website

**Public Contact:** Staff has not received any correspondence or phone calls from neighbors at the time of writing of this report.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Deny the appeal and uphold the decision of the Director of Community Development to deny the Design Review.
2. Grant the appeal and approve the Design Review with the recommended conditions in Attachment 4.
3. Grant the appeal and approve the Design Review with modified conditions.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Alternative 1: Deny the appeal and uphold the decision of the Director of Community Development.

Prepared by: Aastha Vashist, Assistant Planner

Approved by: Gerri Caruso, Principal Planner

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Vicinity and Noticing Map
2. Project Data Table
3. Recommended Findings
4. Recommended Conditions of Approval
5. Appeal Letter by the Applicant
6. Description Letter from the Appellant
7. Floor Area and Floor Area Ratio Table
8. Site and Architectural Plans
9. Alternative design with conventional two-car garage