



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

File #: 16-1116, Version: 1

REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT

File #: 2016-7824

Location: 726 Carolina Avenue (APN: 204-08-004)

Zoning: R0

Proposed Project:

DESIGN REVIEW: for a 110 sq. ft. second floor loft within a previously approved, 3,070 sq. ft. two-story single-family home, for a total of 3,180 sq. ft. and 50% FAR. Project includes a new second floor front balcony.

Applicant / Owner: Philip Goldworth

Environmental Review: Categorical Exemption, Class 1, Section 15301

Project Planner: George Schroeder, (408) 730-7443, gschroeder@sunnyvale.ca.gov

REPORT IN BRIEF

General Plan: Residential Low Density (0-7 du/ac)

Existing Site Conditions: Two-story single-family residence

Surrounding Land Uses

North: Single-family residence

South: Single-family residence

East: Residential condominiums

West: Single-family residence

Issues: Floor Area Ratio, Privacy

Staff Recommendation: Approval with conditions

BACKGROUND

Description of Proposed Project

The applicant proposes a 110 square foot second story loft addition within the interior of a previously-approved and under construction 3,070 square foot, two-story single-family home, resulting in a total of 3,180 square feet and 50% Floor Area Ratio (FAR). A second floor balcony is also proposed on the front of the home. The lot size is 6,400 square feet, which is similar to other surrounding lots. A Design Review is required for the additional floor area and second floor balcony to evaluate compliance with development standards and with the Single Family Home Design Techniques. Planning Commission review is required for FAR exceeding 45 percent.

The existing home was approved by the Planning Commission in 2004 with an FAR of 48% and construction is nearing completion. During a recent inspection, Building Division staff found that the loft and balcony were installed without permits. The applicant subsequently applied for this Design Review permit to formally consider the unpermitted work.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A Class 1 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from the California Environmental Quality Act provisions. Class 1 Categorical Exemptions include minor additions to an existing single-family residence.

DISCUSSION

Loft Addition and Floor Area Ratio

The second floor loft is proposed within a previously-approved high volume (above 15 feet) first floor entry area. The proposed loft does not require an expansion of the existing home footprint nor does it materially change the home's exterior appearance. The only exterior change associated with the loft is the shape of the front-facing second floor window from arched to circular. This window faces the street and does not impact privacy. The loft is not designed to be used as a bedroom and would be accessed from the second floor master bedroom, with additional access to the proposed second floor balcony.

The two-story home was approved prior to the City double-counting the floor area of interior areas with ceiling heights exceeding 15 feet. This requirement went into effect in 2009. The new loft area now counts towards square footage and further increases the FAR beyond the Planning Commission review threshold of 45 percent. At the time of the original 2004 approval, the neighborhood consisted of primarily one-story homes with an average FAR of 23 percent. Since the 2004 approval, there have been larger one-story additions approved for five homes in the neighborhood, with total FAR's averaging 33 percent. There have not been any other two-story applications in the neighborhood.

Although the proposed loft further increases the FAR to 50 percent, it is located entirely within the existing building volume and does not increase the home's mass and bulk. The purpose of the FAR threshold is to minimize mass and bulk and the intensity of development on single-family lots. The loft addition does not increase the visual size of the house when viewed from surrounding properties and the public right-of-way.

Balcony and Privacy Impacts

Second story balconies may present potential privacy impacts to adjacent properties. The project is proposing a 50 square foot balcony at the front of the second story, with access to the master bedroom and proposed loft. A railing in the style of the home (Mediterranean) would wrap on both sides of the balcony. The balcony would be located on top of the first floor roof and within an inset wall area in line with the second story walls. The proposed front and side yard setbacks would be the same as the second story's existing setbacks (45 feet and 9 feet, 6 inches, respectively).

As proposed, there would be views to the street and the neighboring property to the south. The applicant is not proposing privacy mitigation for the balcony because there are similar views from a previously-approved second story window several feet away from the proposed balcony. The applicant also feels that a solid privacy barrier would not contribute positively to the balcony's exterior appearance. However, given the close proximity of the balcony to the neighboring property, staff recommends a condition (Condition PS-1a) that the project include a minimum five-foot high solid screen on the south-facing side of the balcony for privacy mitigation purposes.

Applicable Design Guidelines, Policy Documents, and Development Standards

The proposed project remains consistent with the adopted Single-Family Design Techniques since the loft and balcony are proposed within the footprint of the previously approved home and do not significantly contribute to the massing of the second floor. As conditioned, a privacy screen is required to be installed to prevent views from the second floor balcony onto a neighboring property. The proposed second floor window modification is on the front of the home and will not impact the privacy of adjoining properties. Staff has included Design Review permit findings in Attachment 3.

The proposed project also remains consistent with the applicable Development Standards as set forth in the Sunnyvale Municipal Code. The Project Data Table is located in Attachment 2.

Conclusion

Staff was able to make the required findings for the Design Review permit. Recommended Conditions of Approval are in Attachment 4.

FISCAL IMPACT

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

PUBLIC CONTACT

Notice of Public Hearing

- Published in the *Sun* newspaper
- Notice board with comparison of previously-approved and proposed elevation posted on the site
- 466 notices mailed to property owners and residents within 300 feet of the project site

Staff Report

- Posted on the City's website
- Provided at the Reference Section of the City's Public Library

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. See Attachment 1 for a map of the vicinity and mailing area.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Design Review with the Conditions of Approval in Attachment 4.
2. Approve the Design Review with modified conditions.
3. Deny the Design Review and provide direction to staff and the applicant where changes should be made.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend Alternative 1 to approve the Design Review based on the Findings in Attachment 3 and with the recommended Conditions of Approval in Attachment 4.

Prepared by: George Schroeder, Associate 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. Plan Set