



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

File #: 19-0650, Version: 1

REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Proposed Project:

SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT: To construct a second-story addition of 163 square feet to an existing two-story single-family home, resulting in 2,370 square feet (1,879 square feet living area and 491 square feet garage) and 49.5% floor area ratio (FAR).

Location: 1381 Sydney Drive (APN: 323-09-001)

File #: 2019-7133

Zoning: R-2/PD

Applicant / Owner: Klop Architecture (applicant) / Owen Emry & Jocelyn Su (owner)

Environmental Review: A Class 1 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provisions

Project Planner: Shila Behzadiaria, (408) 730-7456, sbehzadiaria@sunnyvale.ca.gov

REPORT IN BRIEF

General Plan: Low Medium Density Residential

Existing Site Conditions: Two-Story Single-Family Residence

Surrounding Land Uses

North: One-Story Single-Family Residence

South: Two-Story Single-Family Residence

East: One- and Two-Story Single-Family Residence

West: Two-Story Single-Family Residence

Issues: Floor Area Ratio (FAR), side yard setback, architectural compatibility

Staff Recommendation: Approve the Special Development Permit with the Conditions of Approval in Attachment 4, including a requirement to maintain the existing flat roof design over the garage.

BACKGROUND

Description of Proposed Project

The project site is 4,784 square feet in size and is currently developed with a 2,207-square foot two-story, single-family home with 46% FAR. The applicant proposes to add 163 square feet to the back of the existing second floor, resulting in 2,370 square feet and 49.5% FAR. The project includes a requested deviation for the second-floor setback.

Planning Commission review is required because the site was approved as part of a Special Development Permit, and the proposed FAR exceeds 45%.

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

Previous Actions on the Site

The site is part of a subdivision of single-family homes constructed in the late 1960s that are commonly referred to as Bahl Patio Homes. Bahl Patio homes are located to the west of Sunnyvale-Saratoga Road and to the south of West Fremont Avenue. These homes were approved under a Special Development Permit (SDP) allowing for deviations from development standards including lot size, floor area ratio, setbacks, and fence/wall heights. The intent of these deviations was to provide detached single-family homes in a medium density development.

Subsequent staff-level permits were granted to install solar panels on the roof (2005-1212) and a rooftop condenser (2008-0277). There are no other previous planning applications or active Neighborhood Preservation complaints for the subject property.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A Class 1 Categorical Exemption (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301) relieves this project from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act, which covers minor alteration or additions to an existing single-family home involving negligible or no expansion of the existing use.

DISCUSSION

Development Standards

Architecture and Site Layout: The applicant proposes first-floor modifications, including kitchen upgrades and a change to the roof form, from a flat roof to a low-pitched (1 ¼ inch over 12 inches) asymmetrical roof. Most of the first floor is located behind an existing 7-foot tall wall that extends along the front yard. The most visible modification to the first floor is to the garage, which will also include a low-pitched asymmetrical roof.

The existing second floor is an A-frame loft. The applicant is proposing to add 163 square feet to the back of the loft space for creating a bedroom. The project includes modifying the existing A-frame structure into a more conventional second floor, with exterior walls (8-foot plate height) and an asymmetrical roof form. Clerestory windows will also be added to the north (right side) elevations.

The project also includes repainting the exterior of the house. Contrasting paint colors of light grey stucco, dark gray trim and brown compositional shingle roof are proposed. All colors and materials will match throughout the house. New windows have also been designed to be consistent with other Bahl Patio windows found in the neighborhood.

Floor Area Ratio

A single-family residential project with an FAR greater than 45% requires review by the Planning Commission. The house is currently 46% FAR, which was approved under the original SDP. The FAR includes an existing 185 square feet of high ceiling area over the living room on the ground floor. The proposed 163-square foot addition results in 49.5% FAR.

The proposed FAR is within the range of other Bahl Patio homes in this neighborhood, which range from 43% to 58% FAR. The neighborhood also contains single-family homes with up to 60% FAR, as well as townhomes that exceed 100% FAR.

Therefore, the proposed FAR is consistent with the precedent set for the neighborhood.

See Attachment 6 for a neighborhood comparison of gross floor area and floor area ratio.

Setback

The project complies with most of the minimum setback requirements, except for the second-floor left side setback. The second-floor loft is within the existing roof form; therefore, the existing second-floor setback is taken from the sloping roof, and is approximately 7 feet 6 inches. The project includes demolition of the existing roof and construction of conventional walls and a roof on the second floor. The new second-floor wall is set back approximately 6 feet 3 inches along the left side yard, where 7 feet minimum is required.

The SDP allows for consideration of deviations from specified development standards, such as setbacks. The proposed setback deficiency is similar to the other Bahl Patio homes found in this planned development, and preserves the original pattern of the neighborhood. The applicant is not proposing any second-floor windows on the left side yard, which reduces privacy impacts to the left side neighbor.

The findings required in order to grant an SDP and deviations are discussed in Attachment 3. A justification letter was provided by the applicant in Attachment 8.

Solar Access

Sunnyvale Municipal Code Section 19.56.020 limits shading to no more than 10% percent of the roof of any adjacent structure to allow for proper solar access. The solar analysis provided for the entire second story of the subject property demonstrates that the shading would comply with this requirement (shades .03% of the roof area of the adjacent two-story home on the right side).

Neighborhood Impact and Compatibility

The neighborhood is predominantly two-story single-family homes and townhomes, with primarily ranch and Bahl Patio architectural styles. The proposed design of the second-floor addition is consistent with other Bahl Patio homes in the neighborhood, with a similar conventional roof design at 1397 Sydney Drive (four properties to the left). The proposed second-floor roof design also allows for a transition to the ranch-style single-family home along the right side.

Staff is not supportive of the sloped roof over the garage. The other Bahl Patio homes in this neighborhood have flat roofs over the garage, which is prominent from the street view. Therefore, the proposed asymmetrical roof over the garage is not consistent with the Bahl Patio homes. Staff recommends that the roof over the existing garage remain unchanged (see Condition of Approval PS -1 in Attachment 4). Staff is supportive of the sloped roof over the remaining first floor, as it is located behind the garage and wall and is not visible from the street frontage. As conditioned, the proposed design maintains the character of the Bahl Patio homes.

Privacy impacts associated with the second-floor addition are minimal, as there are no windows along the left side wall. Rear and right side setbacks along the second floor comply with minimum setback requirements. Staff has received five letters of support from neighbors, including two adjacent properties to the rear, adjacent townhome along the right side, the Bahl Patio home across the street and the Bahl Patio home at 1398 Sydney Drive (see Attachment 9).

FISCAL IMPACT

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

PUBLIC CONTACT

Notice of Public Hearing

- Published in the *Sun* newspaper
- Posted on the site
- 122 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 received five letters in support of the project from neighbors at the time of writing of this report (see Attachment 9).

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Special Development Permit subject to recommended conditions of approval in Attachment 4, including a requirement to maintain the existing flat roof design over the garage.
2. Approve the Special Development Permit subject to modified conditions of approval.
3. Deny the Special Development Permit and provide direction to staff and applicant on where changes should be made.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Approve the Special Development Permit subject to recommended conditions of approval in Attachment 4, including a requirement to maintain the existing flat roof design over the garage.

Prepared by: Shila Behzadiaria, Associate Planner

Approved by: Noren Caliva-Lepe, Principal Planner

ATTACHMENTS

1. Site, Vicinity and Public Notice Mailing Map
2. Project Data Table
3. Recommended Findings
4. Recommended Conditions of Approval
5. Proposed Site and Architectural Plans
6. Neighborhood Comparison
7. Special Development Justification by the Applicant
8. Applicant's Justification Letter
9. Letters from Neighbors