



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Proposed Project:

SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT to demolish two existing residential units and construct two new two-story detached single family homes, resulting in 2,233 square feet (1,826 square feet of living area and 407 square feet garage) and 56% Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for each home. The project includes reduced lot area and lot width for a small lot subdivision and a deviation to allow tandem parking.

TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP to subdivide one lot into two lots.

Location: 417 and 421 E Washington Ave. (APN: 209-04-034)

File #: 2017-8019

Zoning: R-2/PD

Applicant / Owner: LADC Consulting Inc. / Silver Maple Investments LLC

Environmental Review: Categorically exempt from further environmental review pursuant to Class 3, Section 15303 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Project Planner: Cindy Hom, 408-730-7411, chom@sunnyvale.ca.gov

REPORT IN BRIEF

General Plan: Low-Medium Density Residential

Existing Site Conditions: Two one-story residential units on one lot

Surrounding Land Uses

North: Residential consisting of single family homes and two and three-story multi-family residential buildings

South: Single family homes and two-story apartment buildings

West: Single story homes

East: Single story homes and vacant lots

Issues: Neighborhood compatibility

Staff Recommendation: Alternative 1: Approve the Special Development Permit and Tentative Parcel Map subject to recommended conditions of approval in Attachment 5.

BACKGROUND

The applicant's original project was to construct two detached single-family homes with side-by-side two-car garages and individual driveways with floor area ratio (FAR) of up to 60%. The project was considered and continued by the Planning Commission on August 27, 2018 (see minutes in Attachment 1). The Planning Commission expressed concerns related to the architectural style of the homes, compatibility with the neighborhood, visual prominence of the side-by-side garage configuration and visual massing along the streetscape. The Planning Commission continued the project to allow the applicant time to address these concerns.

Project Description

The applicant revised the project to have greater emphasis of the living area of the homes to the street and reducing the presence of the garages by including tandem garages recessed behind the front porches. The project also reduced FAR to 56%, and added further refinements to the architectural detailing of each home. The homes are still proposed as two-story on individual lots that are side-by-side.

A 3-foot street dedication easement along the street frontage is required to widen the existing sidewalk. The net lot area after the dedication is approximately 7,923 square feet. Setbacks, lot coverage and floor areas are calculated based on the net lot area.

Following are the details for the revised project:

	Net Lot Area	Living Area	Garage	Floor Area	FAR (Net)
Lot 1	3,961 s.f.	1,826 s.f.	407 s.f.	2,233 s.f.	56%
Lot 2	3,962 s.f.	1,826 s.f.	407 s.f.	2,233 s.f.	56%
Total	7,923 s.f.	3,652 s.f.	814 s.f.	4,466 s.f.	56%

A Tentative Parcel Map is required for subdividing a parcel into four or fewer lots. Two separate lots with no common lot or easements are proposed as part of this application.

A Special Development Permit (SDP) is required for site and architectural review, which includes consideration of reduced lot area and lot width and FARs exceeding 45%. A deviation to the parking requirements is requested to allow tandem parking in lieu of side-by-side parking. This request is in response to site plan and architectural changes improvements.

See Attachment 2 for a map of the vicinity and mailing area for notices and Attachment 3 for the Data Table of the project.

Previous Actions on the Site

The existing two residential units and detached garage on one lot were constructed in 1953. A Special Development Permit was approved in 2009 to replace the existing garage with a new 280-square foot detached garage and to allow a deviation for reduced side and rear yard setbacks. There are no active Neighborhood Preservation complaints for this property. The site is not designated as a Heritage Resource.

EXISTING POLICY

General Plan Goals and Policies: The following are key goals and policies from the Land Use and Transportation Chapter of the General Plan which pertains to the proposed project:

Policy LT-4.4: Avoid monotony and maintain visual interest in newly developing neighborhoods, and promote appropriate architectural diversity and variety. Encourage appropriate variations in lot sizes, setbacks, orientation of homes, and other site features.

Policy LT-7.3: Encourage the development of housing options with the goal that the majority of housing is owner-occupied.

Policy CC-1.3: Ensure that new development is compatible with the character of special districts and residential neighborhoods.

Applicable Design Guidelines: The City's Design Guidelines, as noted in the Single-Family Home Design Techniques, provide recommendations for site layout, architecture, and design. These guidelines are referenced in the discussion and analysis below. Refer to Attachment 4 for the required findings.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A Class 3 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provisions that include new construction of up to three single-family residences in urbanized area (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15303). Construction of two new single-family homes would be covered by this exemption.

DISCUSSION

Present Site Conditions

The project site is located on 0.18-acre interior lot, located east of the intersection at Bayview and E. Washington Avenue. The site is developed with two residential units on one lot, with minimal landscaping.

Site Layout and Architecture

The applicant proposes two new rectangular-sized lots that are side-by-side. Each lot will contain one single-family home with an attached tandem garage. Vehicular access into the garages will be provided by individual driveways that also accommodate for the parking of two uncovered vehicles. The driveways are adjoining, which helps to reduce the amount of front yard paving and driveway aprons in the public right-of-way (see plans in Attachment 6).

The immediate neighborhood has a mix of one and two-story homes with traditional Bungalow and Craftsman-style architecture. The proposed homes reflect the traditional style architectural styles found in the neighborhood, with one home designed as Craftsman and the other as Mediterranean. The Craftsman style home includes traditional features, such as horizontal light gray siding, wood shutters, tapered porch columns, wooden window trims and porch railings, variegated grey shake roof and external window grids. The garage door will be a carriage-style door. The Mediterranean style home includes stucco beige walls, stacked stone porch accents, wrought iron railing detailing, wooden window trims, barrel tile roofing and external window grids. The garage door will be heavy ornamental wood.

As designed, the proposed homes are compatible with the neighborhood, consistent with the Single Family Home Design Techniques and add positively to the streetscape.

Development Standards

The proposed project complies with all applicable development standards, except the request for tandem parking. The standards for building setbacks, height and lot coverage for each lot are met (see Attachment 3 for Project Data Table).

Staff has also utilized City Council Policy 1.1.12 (Maximum Standards for Small Lot Single Family Residential Developments) in reviewing the proposed project. This Policy 1.1.12 helps to guide the design of small-lot, single-family subdivisions of 4,200 square feet or smaller.

Lot Area and Width

The net lot area for the subject property is 7,923 square feet which allows up to two units. Properties within the R-2 zoning district are generally at least 8,000 square feet in area and 72 feet wide, with a required density of one unit per 3,600 square feet.

SMC 19.30.020 allows for the consideration of reduced lot area and lot width through a Special Development Permit if overall density is consistent with the zoning district. The proposed lots will be 3,962 square feet in size and 37 feet wide, which is typical for recently-approved two lot subdivisions in the R-2 zoning district. In addition, there are several substandard lots in this neighborhood with lot sizes of 4,000 square feet and lot widths of 40 feet. Therefore, the proposed lot area and width are consistent with past precedent and fits into the neighborhood. The proposed two-lot subdivision is consistent with the permitted density and creates two homeownership opportunities.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

A single-family residential project with an FAR greater than 45% requires review by the Planning Commission. The existing FAR of the single-family homes in the neighborhood ranges from 15% to 63% with an average of 33%, while the gross floor area within the neighborhood range from 1,047 square feet to 3,847 square feet. See Attachment 5 for a neighborhood comparison of gross Floor Area and FAR.

The proposed 56% FAR for both lots is consistent with the precedent set in the neighborhood. The visual mass and bulk of the homes appears reduced from the street due to increased front setbacks, varying wall planes, and the quality architectural style and detailing.

Height

The applicant is proposing two two-story homes with an overall height of 24 feet and 6 inches, where 30 feet maximum is permitted. In keeping with the City's Single Family Design Guidelines policies to minimize bulk and mass, the homes are designed with a 9-foot wall plate on the first floor and an 8-foot wall plate height on the second floor. Furthermore, the use of similar roof forms and pitches, plane changes and decorative materials and finishes help minimize visual bulk and ensures compatibility with the neighborhood.

Parking

The applicant is proposing tandem garages to help alleviate the visual prominence of the garage and to be more in keeping with the neighborhood. The tandem garage requires a deviation, as two side-by-side covered parking spaces are required for new single-family homes.

SMC 19.46.050 allows tandem parking for existing one-car garages that are being upgraded to two on lots that are less than 57 feet wide. The intent of the tandem allowance for existing garages is to address the difficulty of adding side-by-side parking on a narrow lot and to help reduce the visual impact of parking. Staff finds that the narrow lot width and neighborhood pattern meet the intent of the code. Therefore, staff supports the deviation and finds that the tandem garage appearance is compatible with the neighborhood pattern.

Landscaping and Usable Open Space

The applicant proposed new landscaping throughout the project site. The landscape proposal includes installation of six 24-inch box trees and other various shrubs and groundcover throughout the front and back yards. Proposed plantings include California Black Oak and Western Redbud trees, Pacific Wax Myrtle, California Lilac, Silver Lupine shrubs, and Clematis vines. As proposed, the landscaping plan complies with the City's Water Efficient Landscaping standards and provides for comprehensive landscaping that is compatible with the neighborhood pattern and consistent with City's design guidelines in terms of utilizing landscaping to emphasis entries, reduce privacy and minimize energy usage.

The proposed lots meet the minimum useable open space requirement by providing approximately 900 square feet of usable open space on each lot in the back yards, where a minimum of 500 square feet is required.

Solar Access

SMC 19.56.020 states that no permit shall 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 proposed home on the west of the subject property will shade the western adjacent home by 9.8%.

Green Building Requirements

The project is deemed completed under the old Green Building Ordinance and is required to meet Sunnyvale's Green Building standards by achieving a minimum of 80 GreenPoint Rated Checklist points with verification by a Green Point Rater.

Expected Impact on the Surrounding Neighborhood

The surrounding neighborhood is a mix of densities and house styles that includes single-family homes, duplexes and multi-family apartments that range in height and stories. The proposed project is consistent with the common site layout, density and utilize architectural elements that are compatible with the character of the neighborhood. Furthermore, the proposed tandem garages and wide porches would be in keeping with the character of the neighborhood where other homes with tandem garages and wide porches are common in the area.

Potential privacy impacts for adjoining neighbors are mitigated in several ways. Required egress windows on the second floor are along the front and rear elevations to avoid direct viewing to the side. In addition, windows along the side elevations will either be high sill (bottom sill is 5 feet from the ground) or made of opaque glass. Screening trees will also be installed to obscure line of sight into adjacent yards and windows.

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
- 386 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.

Planning Commission Study Session:

The applicant attended a Planning Commission Study Session on May 13, 2019. To address concerns raised during the August 27, 2018 public hearings, the applicant presented three options for consideration:

1. Option 1: Two single-family homes, side-by-side, with tandem garages and individual driveways;
2. Option 2: Two single-family homes, side by side, with detached garages in the rear yards and individual driveways;
3. Option 3: Two single-family homes on in flag lot configuration, with a shared driveway.

Options 2 and 3 would have resulted in setback deviations. Option 1 seemed to best respond to concerns raised by the Planning Commission.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Special Development Permit and the Tentative Parcel Map subject to recommended conditions of approval in Attachment 5.
2. Approve the Special Development Permit and the Tentative Parcel Map subject to modified conditions of approval.
3. Deny the Special Development Permit and the Tentative Parcel Map and provide direction to staff and the applicant on where changes should be made.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Approve the Special Development Permit and the Tentative Parcel Map subject to recommended conditions of approval in Attachment 5.

Prepared by: Cindy Hom, Associate Planner

Reviewed by: Noren Caliva-Lepe, Principal Planner

Approved by: Andrew Miner, Assistant Community Development Director

ATTACHMENTS

1. August 27, 2018 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
2. Vicinity and Noticing Radius Map

3. Project Data Table
4. Recommended Findings
5. Recommended Conditions of Approval
6. Project Plans
7. FAR Study