



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

File #: 20-0299, Version: 1

REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Proposed Project:

DESIGN REVIEW to construct a new two-story single-family home, resulting in a total floor area of 4,578 square feet (4,087 square feet living area and 491 square feet garage) and 52% floor area ratio (FAR).

Location: 1561 Barton Drive (APN: 320-03-035)

File #: 2019-7127

Zoning: Low Density Residential (R-1)

Applicant / Owner: LU Constructions and Design / Rama Krishna Chitta Trustee & et al

Environmental Review: A Class 3 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provisions.

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

REPORT IN BRIEF

General Plan: Low Density Residential (RLO)

Existing Site Conditions: One-story single-family home

Surrounding Land Uses

North: One-story single-family home

South: Two-story single-family home

East: One-story single-family home

West: One-story single-family home

Issues: Neighborhood Compatibility

Staff Recommendation: Approve the Design Review with the Conditions of Approval in Attachment 4.

BACKGROUND

Description of Proposed Project

The project site is 8,817 square feet in size and is currently developed with a one-story single-family home. The applicant proposes to demolish the existing 2,048-square foot house and construct a new two-story single-family resulting in 4,578 square feet with approximately 52% floor area ratio (FAR).

A Design Review is required for construction of a new home to evaluate compliance with development standards and with the Single-Family Home Design Techniques. Planning Commission review is required for homes exceeding 3,600 square feet gross floor area or 45% FAR. The

proposed project will exceed both thresholds. 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

There are no previous Planning approvals and are no active neighborhood preservation cases on this property.

EXISTING POLICY

Applicable Design Guidelines:

The proposed home is consistent with the adopted Single-Family Home Design Techniques since the proposed design maintains the existing form of houses, materials, and design elements of the neighborhood. It would have minimal visual impact to the neighborhood. Findings for the Single-Family Design Techniques are included in Attachment 3.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Class 3 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from California Environmental Quality Act provisions. Class 3(a) Categorical exemptions includes construction of a single-family residence in a residential zoning district.

DISCUSSION

Present Site Conditions

The neighborhood is predominantly comprised of one-story single-family homes, with a two-story home located to the left of the subject property. Most of the homes were built in the late 1950s with Ranch-style architectural features. More recently remodeled homes have generally maintained the simple Ranch-style but have incorporated Mediterranean-style elements onto the building exteriors, such as stone bases, and arched windows and doors. The subject property is currently developed with a 2,955-square foot one-story single-family home on a rectangular-shaped lot.

Architecture and Site Layout

The proposed project includes demolition of the existing home and construction of a two-story single-family home with an attached two-car garage. The new 4,578-square foot home will include four bedrooms, four bathrooms, a 391-square foot theater and 491-square foot garage. The property owner also plans to add a swimming pool in the rear yard, which is permitted by right and will be reviewed through a ministerial building permit.

The proposed project has been designed to be Mediterranean in style. Typical Mediterranean features that have been incorporated into the design of the proposed project include brown barrel tile roof, off-white stucco walls, stone base, arched openings, wooden doors with ornamental wrought iron detail, wrought iron balcony railings and decorative lighting.

The proposed style includes simple shapes and roof and incorporates variegated grey and brown stone veneer at the base that wraps around the building, which provides architectural relief from the overall mass and bulk. The stacked stone is proposed to be at least 4 inches in height to better match the scale of the new house.

Windows are a combination of casement windows and side-sliding, with brown clad exterior grids that are recessed into the wall and are further enhanced with 4-inch dark brown window trim. The windows on the front elevation will be arched to compliment the Mediterranean style of the home. All

the windows along the second-floor side elevations are proposed to be high sill to reduce privacy impacts. See Attachment 5 for the colors and materials board.

Staff finds that the proposed new home is compatible with the neighborhood, includes high quality colors and materials, and is consistent with recently approved Planning Commission Design Review projects.

Development Standards

The proposed project complies with the applicable development standards as set forth in the Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC). The Project Data Table for the proposed project can be found in Attachment 2.

Floor Area and Floor Area Ratio: A single-family home proposing a gross floor area greater than 3,600 square feet or a floor area ratio (FAR) greater than 45% requires Planning Commission Review. The proposed project has a gross floor area of 4,578 square feet on an 8,817-square foot lot, which results in 52% FAR.

Homes in the neighborhood range in size from 1,818 square feet to 4,287 square feet with an average of 2,490 square feet. The existing FARs in the vicinity range from 14% to 59%, with an average of 28%. The proposed project would be the largest home, and one of four two-story single-family homes in the immediate neighborhood. Currently, the largest home in the neighborhood is directly adjacent to the subject site along the left side (1567 Barton Drive) with a gross floor area of 4,287 square feet and 59% FAR. The proposed project will be almost 300 square feet larger than the house on the left side but will have a lower FAR because it is located on a larger lot.

FAR is used as a measurement of bulk and mass. Staff finds that the resulting mass and bulk of the proposed home will not have a significant impact as the project exceeds all minimum setback requirements. The second story is located more than 40 feet from the front property line and is located closer to the second-story home on the left side. In addition, height is minimized by incorporating plate heights of 9 feet on the first floor and 8 feet on the second floor, with a peak height of less than 25 feet where 30 feet maximum is allowed. The well-articulated building façade, and high-quality materials also help in minimizing the visual impact of the proposed home.

The Single-Family Home Design Technique Policy 3.4A states that “for new second stories in predominately one-story neighborhoods, the second-floor area should not exceed 35% of the first-floor area (including the garage area).”

The intent of the guideline is to minimize the visual bulk of the second floor. The proposed project is consistent with the recommended guideline. The ratio of the second floor to the first floor would be 34.6%. Therefore, the proposed second floor addition is reasonable, meets the intent of the guideline, and is consistent with precedence set in the neighborhood.

Solar Access: SMC Section 19.56.020 states that no permit may be issued for any construction that would interfere with solar access by shading more than 10% of the roof of any structure on a nearby property. The solar analyses illustrate that the proposed second story will shade 4.6% of the adjacent roof of the property at 1555 Barton Drive (See Sheets A5 of Attachment 5). The adjacent property has recently mounted solar panels on the roof. The analysis show that in the worst-case scenario,

only 0.5% of the solar panels will be shaded.

Landscaping: There are a total of five trees on-site, of which three are considered to be protected trees per the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance (12-inch diameter measured 4.5 feet from the ground). Protected trees include a Palm tree and a Liquidambar tree in the rear yard, and a Liquidambar tree in the front yard next to the driveway. The applicant is proposing to remove all three protected trees, either due to the poor health of the tree or conflicts with the existing utility lines along the rear property line (see Arborist Report in Attachment 7). Staff has reviewed the arborist report with the City Arborist and finds that the proposed removal of the protected trees is reasonable due to heavy pruning from power lines.

Per the City's Tree Replacement Policy, a total of five 24-inch box replacement trees is required. Staff will review the tree replacement locations and species through a separate staff-level application prior to building permit submittal (see Condition of Approval BP-5 in Attachment 4).

Neighborhood Impacts and Compatibility

The proposed first and second floors exceeds the minimum required setbacks from all the sides. The applicant has also minimized the size of the second-floor windows along the side yards. The new second floor windows facing the side yards will be high sill (bottom sill at 5 feet above floor) to minimize privacy impact on the neighboring property. Staff will work with the applicant to select drought tolerant, evergreen screening trees along the rear and side property line to further reduce privacy impacts.

The balcony on the rear elevation is set back approximately 24 feet, where 20 feet minimum is required. While the setback requirement is met, the balcony has been designed to protrude beyond the walls of the second floor and poses privacy impacts to the adjacent neighbors to the rear and sides. The adjacent neighbors are primarily one-story with minimal rear yards. Therefore, staff recommends that the proposed balcony be removed and replaced with an egress window (see Conditions of Approval PS-1 in Attachment 4). As already noted, staff will work with the applicant on the planting of screening trees to minimize impact from the second-floor windows.

As conditioned with privacy trees and removal of the balcony, staff finds privacy impacts to be minimized. The applicant also proposes to utilize high-quality material that will complement the architectural style found in the neighborhood and will enhance the existing streetscape.

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
- 54 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: Since the mailing of public hearing notices, staff has received five written comments from nearby residents. See Attachment 9 for the Letters from Neighbors. In summary, the comments have outlined concerns regarding the second-floor privacy impacts, construction noise and dust, size of the house, and the screening trees.

As conditioned by staff with screening trees and removal of the balcony, staff finds that privacy impacts are minimized, the size of the house is consistent with the precedent set for the neighborhood, and the project meets the Single-Family Home Design Techniques. As previously noted, the second floor exceeds minimum setback requirements and meets the 35% second to first floor ratio guideline. In addition, the property is not located in a Single-Story Overlay District; therefore, a second story is permitted.

With implementation of standard construction hours and best practices in the conditions of approval (BP-11), staff also finds temporary construction-related impacts to also be minimized.

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.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Approve the Design Review with the Conditions of Approval in Attachment 4.

Prepared by: Shila Bagley, 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. Architectural and Site Plans
6. Neighborhood Square Footage Comparison
7. Arborist Report
8. Colors and Materials Board
9. Letters from Neighbors