



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

File #: 20-0910, Version: 1

REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Proposed Project: Related application on a 5,617 square foot site:

DESIGN REVIEW to allow a 197 square foot first floor addition and 864 square foot second floor addition (1,061 square foot total) to an existing one-story single-family home, resulting in 2,818 square feet (2,434 square foot living and 384 square foot garage) and 50% floor area ratio.

Location: 1235 Pecos Way (APN:104-27-009)

File #: 2019-7599

Zoning: Low Density Residential (R-0)

Applicant / Owner: Dennis Schafer (applicant) / Kevin and Jeanna Lurie (owner)

Environmental Review: Projects which are disapproved are exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Section 15270).

Project Planner: Cindy Hom, (408) 730-7411, Chom@sunnyvale.ca.gov

REPORT IN BRIEF

General Plan: Low Density Residential

Existing Site Conditions: One-story single-family home.

Surrounding Land Uses

North: One-story single-family home.

South: One-story single-family home.

East: One-story single-family home.

West: One-story single-family home.

Issues: Neighborhood Compatibility

Staff Recommendation: Deny the Design Review and provide direction to staff and the applicant where changes should be made.

BACKGROUND

The project site is a 5,617square foot residential lot and is currently developed with a one-story single-family home. The applicant proposes a 197 square foot first floor addition and a new 864 square foot second floor addition resulting in 2,818 square feet (2,434 square foot living area and 384 square foot garage) and 50.2% floor area ratio (FAR).

Design Review is required for the 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 a FAR greater than 45%. The proposed project will exceed the 45% FAR threshold. See Attachment 1 for a map of the

vicinity and mailing area for notices and Attachment 2 for the Project Data Table.

Design Review permits are reviewed for consistency with the Single-Family Home Design Techniques and Citywide Design Guidelines. These design guidelines are intended to promote increased property value, protect property owner livability and investment by discouraging inappropriate and out of scale adjacent homes and maintaining neighborhood compatibility and high-quality architecture.

Based on the review of the project, staff is not able to support the project due to inconsistencies with the City's Design Guidelines. As proposed, the house design is not compatible with the low-scale, one-story neighborhood. The streetscape reveals that the house dominates the neighboring homes. The house must be redesigned to better blend with the neighborhood. Further analysis is provided in the discussion below.

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 addition is inconsistent with the Single-Family Home Design Techniques. Findings and consistency analysis for the proposed project are included in Attachment 3. The key areas of concern and basis for denial have been noted below.

Design Principals

The Single-Family Home Design Techniques are based on seven Design Principals, which should be respected in all residential projects. The first three design principals speak to compatibility of the home and/or additions within the immediate context of the neighborhood. Specifically, they include 1) Reinforce prevailing neighborhood home orientation and entry patterns; 2) Respect the scale, bulk and character of homes in the adjacent neighborhood; and 3) Design homes to respect their immediate neighbors.

Inconsistent - The existing neighborhood is predominately one-story homes in an "L" shape pattern with the garage located closer to the street and the entry into the home setback parallel to the street. The proposed addition reorients the entry perpendicular to the street and adds a large two-story addition at the front of the house spanning the existing width of the home. This results in second floor side setbacks of two foot (2') setback on the west and no setback on the east. The result is a second floor addition which does not respect the existing single-story neighborhood and adjacent neighbors.

Design Techniques

The proposed additions are inconsistent with following Design Techniques. Many of these techniques reinforce the three Design Principals noted above.

3.1 NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERNS - Respect neighborhood home orientation and setback patterns.

NP-4. Where significant additions to existing homes are planned, it is generally better to place those additions at the rear of the house or at the side, if side yard setbacks allow.

Finding Not Met. The proposed second floor additions are located within a predominately one story single-family neighborhood. The new second floor has been located at the front of the home and spans the width of the house. This results in no transition to the adjacent single-story homes or the overall character of the neighborhood.

3.3 ENTRIES - Design entries to be in scale and character with the neighborhood.

EN-1. Locate home entries so that they are visible from the street.

EN-9. Where a particular home entry type is typical of the neighborhood (e.g., roof covering eave parallel to the street), design any new entry form to be consistent with that entry type. Avoid bold, formal entry changes in neighborhoods with modest, recessed entries.

Finding Not Met. The project proposes the front entryway on the right side elevation. The entry door should be located on the front elevation of the house to be consistent with the prevalent neighborhood pattern.

3.4 SECOND FLOORS - Design second floors to complement first floor forms and minimize their visual impact

SF-1. The area of the second floor should not exceed the common standard of the neighborhood. 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).

Finding Not Met. The proposed second floor addition is 41% of the first floor. Considering that the neighborhood is predominately one-story homes, exceeding the 35% guideline is not acceptable nor consistent with the intent of the guideline.

SF-3. If a traditional second floor form is necessary, set the front, rear, and sides of the second floor back from first floor walls. In general, it is best to set second floor areas back as far as possible from the front facade of the home (e.g., five feet or more). Side and rear facade setbacks of three to five feet are generally sufficient. Care should be given to avoiding second story bulk near the front of the home when similar bulk is absent from adjacent homes.

Finding Not Met. The proposed second floor addition is located at the front of the home and generally spans the full width of the first floor. Second floor side setbacks have not been provided and therefore the second story addition is inconsistent with this guideline.

SF-4. For second floors with an area greater than 35% of the ground floor area, setbacks should generally be greater unless the prevailing pattern of second floor setbacks in the neighborhood is less.

Finding Not Met. As noted above, the proposed second floor addition is 41% of the first floor. The addition has been located at the front of the home and spans the full width of the first floor. The only significant second floor setback is at the rear of the home. Increased second floor side setbacks and additional setback from the first floor front face have not been provided.

SF-5. Unless two story high walls are common in the neighborhood, maintain a roof segment between the first and second floor walls for at least 50% of the building perimeter. Generally, these roof forms should be carried around building corners to provide visual continuity between adjacent house facades. In one story neighborhoods, avoid two story walls without intervening roof eaves on front elevations.

Finding Not Met. As noted above, the proposed second floor addition has been pushed to the front of the home and provides minimal to no additional side setbacks at the second level. Since the neighborhood is predominately one story, two story wall elements are not appropriate.

SF-6. New homes and second story additions constructed adjacent to smaller homes should maintain a one story profile adjacent to the one story homes as a transition to any two story building element.

Finding Not Met. As noted above, the proposed second floor addition has been pushed to the front of the home and provides minimal to no additional side setbacks at the second level. This results in no transition from the adjacent one-story homes to the proposed new second floor.

SF-11. Relate second floor elements to first floor masses. Avoid large projecting forms on the second floor when first floor elements are modest in size and scale.

Finding Not Met. The proposed roof forms for the additions and new second floor have been designed to complement the existing first floor forms. However, the proposed height and width result in a second-floor roof form that is out of proportion with the first floor.

SF-15. Consider the use of more than one wall material to separate first and second floor building elements. Lighter appearing materials should be used on upper floors while heavy materials (e.g., stone) are appropriate for the ground floor. Alternatively, subtle changes of color between ground and second floor areas can reduce the visual bulk of homes so long as color changes are made at trim pieces or other natural dividing lines between the floors.

Finding Not Met. The proposed second floor addition includes a change in exterior materials; however, the material is minimal and vertically oriented adding to the visual height of the second floor. The existing architecture in the neighborhood is more horizontal in style. In this type of neighborhood, the second floor should be covered in a horizontal wood material to reflect the style in the neighborhood.

SF-19. Generally, locate second floor additions over the living portion of existing homes rather than over garages to maintain a visual balance between the first and second floor building masses. Especially avoid placing second floor additions over existing first floor garages that project out in front of the remainder of the home.

Finding Not Met. The proposed second floor has been located over the garage and front half of the existing home, resulting in an addition that is not well integrated into the existing home.

Based on the information noted above, staff finds that the proposed additions are inconsistent with the adopted Single-Family Home Design Techniques in terms of bulk and massing, neighborhood compatibility and results in visual conflicts. Findings for the Single-Family Design Techniques are included in Attachment 3.

Staff notes that several suggestions have been provided to the applicant to bring the proposed design into closer conformance with the Single-Family Design Techniques. Changes could include the following: 1) Reduce the second story mass to no greater than 35% of the first story; 2) The second story should nestle into the first story; 3) The second-story front should be moved set further back from the front property line (5-10 ft. more); 4) The second-story sides should be further setback from the side property lines to break up the two-story wall that towers over the neighbors at the minimum setback; 5) The second-story plate height should be no greater than 8 ft. on all exterior walls, including the rear; 6) The second-story plate height in the front is 8'-3", and the rear, 9'-10"; and 7) The right elevation should have a symmetrical gable to reduce height. If the Planning Commission can make the required Findings to approve the project, these recommended changes have been included in the Recommended Conditions of Approval in Attachment. 4

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Environmental Review is not required for projects which are disapproved as they are Statutorily Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Section 15270).

If the Planning Commission chooses Alternative 2 (Approve the Project), then the project would be Categorically Exempt, (Class 3). This exemption relieves this project from CEQA and includes construction of a single-family residence and/or additions in a residential zoning district.

DISCUSSION

Present Site Conditions

The neighborhood is comprised of one-story single-family homes. The existing home was built in the late 1958 with mid-century architectural features that includes low pitched gabled roof with deep fascias, large windows, wide porch and materials consisting of stucco and wooden elements. The subject property is currently developed with a 1,757-square foot one-story single-family home on a rectangular-shaped lot.

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 45% Floor Area Ratio (FAR) requires Planning Commission Review. The proposed project has a gross floor area of 2,818 square feet on a 5,617 square foot lot, which results in 50% FAR.

Homes in the neighborhood range in size from 1,468 square feet to 2,324 square feet with an average of 1,644 square feet. The existing FARs in the vicinity range from 16% to 40%, with an average of 28%. The proposed project would be the largest home in the immediate neighborhood.

The proposed 50% FAR would appear to be out of character with the neighborhood considering the surrounding homes consist of one-story homes and have FARs that range between 16% and 40%.

Staff finds that the bulk and massing of the proposed home to be inconsistent and incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood due to tall second story addition along the front elevation that does adequately transition to the adjacent one-story homes.

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
- 112 notices mailed to property owners and residents within 300 feet of the project site

Staff Report

- 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 Design Review and provide direction to staff and the applicant where changes should be made.
2. Approve the Design Review based on revised Findings in Attachment 3 and subject to the Conditions of Approval in Attachment 4
3. Alternative 2 with modifications to the Conditions of Approval. in Attachment 4.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Deny the Design Review and provide direction to staff and the applicant where changes should be made.

The proposed design cannot be supported because the bulk and massing of the proposed home is inconsistent with the City's design guidelines and incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood due to tall second story addition along the front elevation that does adequately transition to the adjacent one-story homes.

Prepared by: Cindy Hom, Associate

Approved by: Shaunn Mendrin, Principal Planner

ATTACHMENTS

1. Site, Vicinity and Public Notice Mailing Map
2. Project Data Table
3. Recommended Findings
4. Recommended Conditions of Approval
5. Site and Architectural Plans
6. FAR Study
7. Materials Board