



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

File #: 21-0522, Version: 1

REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Proposed Project: Related applications on a 3,864-square foot site:

SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT: to construct a single-story addition of 524 square feet to an existing two-story single-family home, resulting in 2,551 square feet (2,092 square feet living area, 21 square feet front porch, and 438 square feet garage) and 65% floor area ratio (FAR).

Location: 878 W. McKinley Ave (APN: 165-46-058)

File #: 2020-7591

Zoning: R-1.7 (Low Medium Density Residential)/PD (Planned Development)

Applicant / Owner: Arch & Land Development Inc. (applicant) / Tie Zeng and Xiaojie Qiu (owner)

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

Project Planner: Kelly Cha, (408) 730-7408, kcha@sunnyvale.ca.gov

REPORT IN BRIEF

General Plan: Residential Low Medium Density (7-14 du/ac)

Existing Site Conditions: Two-story single-family home

Surrounding Land Uses

North: Open Space (Washington Park)

South: Two-story single-family home

East: Two-story single-family home

West: Two-story single-family home

Issues: Neighborhood Compatibility, Lot Coverage, and Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

Staff Recommendation: Approve the Special Development Permit with the conditions in Attachment 4 to reduce the size of the project to 40% lot coverage and 60% FAR.

BACKGROUND

The existing two-story, single-family home was constructed in 1993 as part of the former Benner School site development by Summer Hill Homes. The existing residence is approximately 1,992 square feet in size with a floor area ratio (FAR) of 51.6%.

The Benner School site development is zoned R-1.7/PD. The R-1.7/PD zoning district was created to allow smaller lots (2,600 to 4,000 square feet) with smaller homes (40% lot coverage and 50% FAR). The PD combining district is always included with the R-1.7 zoning district to allow site design flexibility.

Description of Proposed Project: The project proposes a first-floor addition of 524 square feet to the rear of the existing two-story single-family home, resulting in 2,551 square feet, including the 428-

square foot garage, and a floor area ratio (FAR) of 65% and lot coverage of 45%. The proposed addition would extend the rear of the home on the first floor to create a larger kitchen and family room as well as an additional bedroom and bathroom.

This Special Development Permit application requires Planning Commission review to exceed 50% FAR and 40% lot coverage. The Planning Commission may take into account the proposed architecture, existing neighborhood, and adopted Single Family Home Design Techniques. The Planned Development (PD) combining district allows approval of specified deviations to the zoning code including lot coverage and FAR.

See Attachment 1 for a map of the vicinity and mailing area for notices and Attachment 2 for the Data Table of the project.

Previous Actions on the Site: Other than the original Benner School site development permit, there are no previous planning applications related to the subject site.

EXISTING POLICY

Applicable Design Guidelines: The proposed home is consistent with the adopted Single-Family Home Design Techniques since the proposed design maintains consistency with the neighborhood through its proposed form, materials, and design elements. This results in minimal visual impact to the neighborhood. Findings for the Single-Family Design Techniques are included in Attachment 3.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Categorical Exemption Class 1 relieves this project from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provisions.

DISCUSSION

Present Site Conditions: The property is located west of the Sunnyvale Downtown and immediately south of Washington Park. The property is generally surrounded by W. McKinley Ave to the north, Markham to the south, Pescadero Terrace to the east, and Sunset Ave to the west. The property is an interior lot located along W. McKinley Ave.

Architecture: The existing architecture of the home is similar to the other homes in the development with stucco exterior and composition shingle roofing material. As proposed, the rear addition would match the existing materials and architectural character of the house and the surrounding neighborhood. Proposed materials that match the existing home can be found in Attachment 6. No modifications are proposed to the second floor or to the front facade.

Development Standards: As approved, the R-1.7/PD zoning district development standards include setbacks of 12 feet in the front, 0 feet on one side, nine to 15 feet on the other side and 16 to 20 feet in the rear as detailed in the Project Data Table (Attachment 2). This zoning district allows small lots (2,600 - 4,000 square feet in size). The project complies with most development standards, such as setbacks, height and parking. The applicant is requesting to exceed the allowable lot coverage and FAR.

Lot Coverage: The maximum lot coverage permitted is 40%. The applicant proposes 45% to accommodate the 524 square foot addition.

Since the development was constructed in 1993, 13 homes have been approved for additions. All but one have maintained lot coverage under 40%. In 2015, the Planning Commission approved 42% lot coverage for an addition at 866 Markham Terrace (SDP 2014-8042) due to its unique site condition. The property at 866 Markham Terrace is located in a cul-de-sac and abuts Stratford School and the Sunnyvale School District along two property lines. While the Planning Commission at that time was concerned about setting a new precedent, they found that the property was unique enough to warrant the additional lot coverage.

The proposed project site abuts single-family homes on all sides and lacks a unique condition that would warrant a deviation from lot coverage. Compliance with the 40% lot coverage limit would result in the reduction of approximately 194 square feet, for an addition of 330 square feet in size. Staff finds that reducing the addition to 40% would still maintain a reasonable addition to the home.

Floor Area Ratio: A total of 13 homes in the development were approved with FAR beyond the 50% limitation. See Attachment 7 for all the previous Special Development Permits within the Benner School site development.

It should be noted that when this neighborhood was originally developed, the City did not count vaulted ceiling areas above 15 feet in height as gross floor area or include it in the FAR calculation. In 2009, the Zoning Code definition of "Gross Floor Area" for single-family homes was amended to include areas with a 15-foot ceiling height or greater to be counted twice. The current zoning code requires that those open ceiling areas above 15 feet now be calculated as if they were floor area. With this change in the definition, all of the homes in the development with a vaulted ceiling area in the living room greater than 15 feet would now be calculated with an increased FAR over 50%.

The applicant proposes 65% FAR. The largest FAR approved in the development is 63%, which is for the house at 866 Markham Terrace. Therefore, approval of the project as proposed would result in an FAR that is greater than others found in the development.

A reduction in lot coverage to 40% would result in an FAR of 60%, which would be within the range of approved FARs in the development.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY

As currently proposed with 45% lot coverage and 65% FAR, staff finds that the project is inconsistent with neighborhood precedent and would result in a larger home than was intended on these smaller lots.

Staff recommends that the addition be reduced to 40% lot coverage and 60% FAR, resulting in a 330 square foot addition. The reduction would still allow a reasonable addition to the home, while also allowing for neighborhood compatibility. Staff would work with the applicant to ensure compliance with the reduced square footage and design guidelines.

FISCAL IMPACT

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

PUBLIC CONTACT

As of the date of staff report preparation, staff has received no comments from the neighbors.

Notice of Public Hearing:

- Published in the *Sun* newspaper
- Posted on the site
- 64 notices mailed to property owners and residents within 300 feet of the property

Staff Report:

- Posted on the City's website

Agenda:

- Posted on the City's official notice bulletin board
- Posted on the City's website

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Special Development Permit with the conditions in Attachment 4 to reduce the size of the project to 40% lot coverage and 60% FAR.
2. Approve the Special Development Permit, as requested by the applicant with 45% lot coverage and 65% FAR, with the conditions in Attachment 4 (excluding Condition PS-1 to reduce lot coverage).
3. Approve the Special Development Permit with modified conditions.
4. Deny the Special Development Permit and provide direction to staff and the applicant where changes should be made.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Approve the Special Development Permit with the conditions in Attachment 4 to reduce the size of the project to 40% lot coverage and 60% FAR.

Prepared by: Kelly Cha, Associate Planner

Approved by: Noren Caliva-Lepe, Principal Planner

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity and Noticing Map
2. Project Data
3. Recommended Findings
4. Recommended Conditions of Approval
5. Site and Architectural Plans
6. Proposed Materials List
7. Previous Special Development Permits