



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

18-1085

Agenda Date: 2/13/2019

REPORT TO THE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

File #: 2018-7598

Location: 1135 E. Arques Ave. (APN: 205-24-009)

Applicant / Owner: Kurious Design Solutions / Chen Family LP

Proposed Project:

USE PERMIT: To allow an interactive team training facility (Escape Room) within an existing industrial building, installation of associated site improvements and a parking adjustment to the minimum parking requirements.

Reason for Permit: A Use Permit is required for recreation and enrichment uses in the M-S/POA Zoning District.

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

Issues: Parking

Recommendation: Approve with conditions

BACKGROUND

The project was continued from the December 13, 2018 Zoning Administrator hearing to provide additional time to satisfy Fire Department requirements for emergency vehicle access.

The project is situated on a 1.02-acre site, developed with a 15,594-square foot one-story industrial office building and various site improvements, located immediately east of the intersection at E. Arques and Santa Trinita Avenue. The Sunnyvale General Plan designates the site as Industrial and zoned as Industrial and Service (M-S) with the Places of Assembly (POA) Combining District. Surrounding lands uses includes other industrial and professional office buildings to the north, west and south and quasi-public and commercial uses to east. The permit history for the subject site is summarized below:

Previous Planning Projects related to the Subject Application: • Site and architectural approval for the building was granted in 1971. • Miscellaneous Plan Permit approval for site signage approved in 2001	Yes
Neighborhood Preservation Complaint	None
Deviations from Standard Zoning Requirements	None

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant is requesting a Use Permit to allow for the operation of a 9,248-square foot recreation and enrichment facility. The project consists of minor interior tenant improvements and a parking adjustment to allow for operations of a recreational facility that offers team-based intellectual games and activities for school age children and adults. The proposed facility offers five escape game rooms, which are themed with various scenarios that can range from different time periods or places. The proposed facility accommodates a group of 4 to 6 people per game room and employs five employees at any given time. The proposed hours of operation include Saturday and Sunday from 12:00 PM to 10:00 PM and Wednesday through Friday from 2:00 PM to 10:00 PM.

There will be no food or beverage sales or service provided on-site. As conditioned, the applicant is required to submit a security plan to the Department of Public Safety for review and approval. The security plan shall ensure adequate safety measures are provided and adhere to. (Recommended Condition No. BP-8)

Floor Plan: The proposed floor plan consists of a front lobby, office area, ancillary space for storage and restrooms, and approximately 4,837 square feet will be utilized for the five escape game rooms. The project does not propose any exterior changes to the building.

Parking: The parking lot provides a total of 56 parking spaces. Based on all the uses of the building, a total of 58 parking spaces are required, as summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1:
Parking Summary

Land Use	Square feet	Required Parking Ratio	Required # of Spaces
Proposed Recreation and Enrichment	9,248	4 spaces per 1,000 square feet	37
Existing Offices	6,346	3.3 spaces per 1,000 square feet	21
Total Required			58
Total Provided			56

Per SMC 19.46.130, parking adjustments may be granted from parking ratio minimums, maximums or type of bicycle parking provided for nonresidential uses or for special housing developments provided the required findings are met.

The project meets finding (C) and (F) in that the peak hour parking demand for the proposed Escape Room facility is complementary to the office use. Based on the type of use and hours of operation, the proposed escape room peak use occurs during the evening hours on the weekdays and weekends; whereas, the office use generally peaks during the daytime on the weekdays.

The proposed use has an unusual characteristic that results in less parking demand. As stated previously, each escape room would accommodate a group of 4 to 6 people per game room and a maximum of five employees at any given time. If the site operates at capacity and assumes everyone drives their own vehicles, the maximum number of cars anticipated would be 35 vehicles. Thus, the demand for parking is lower than the 37 spaces that is required by the zoning code. Based on these characteristics, the proposed parking is adequate and will not spill over onto surrounding properties or streets.

Site Improvements

The original development did not include a trash enclosure. Due to the change in use, the site is required to upgrade to site to comply with current development standards. The applicant is proposing a new 165 square-foot trash enclosure that will be constructed with 7-foot tall masonry walls and metal roof cover. Staff is recommending a roof cover to ensure the trash facilities are fully screened. The proposed enclosure is located at the rear of the lot and will be conditioned to meet the City's design guidelines and requirements for access and servicing. (Recommended Condition No. PS-1 and BP-10)

Neighborhood Impacts / Compatibility

There are minimal neighborhood impacts that are anticipated, as the proposed use complies with the parking requirements and does not generate any noise impacts. The proposed project provides a recreational destination adjacent to other commercial and employment centers.

Public Contact: 18 notices were sent to surrounding property owners and residents adjacent to the subject site in addition to standard noticing practices, including advertisement in the Sunnyvale Sun Newspaper and on-site posting. Staff received one comment letter from the public (Attachment 5). The opposition letter cited concerns about parking and security.

Environmental Determination: The Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guideline Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations. CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 applies to projects that consist of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion or use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agencies determination. The Project is a use permit request to allow for a 9,248-square foot recreation and enrichment use to operate within an existing commercial building. Therefore, the proposed project qualifies for the exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 and no further environmental review is required.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Use Permit with recommended Findings (Attachment 2) and Conditions of Approval (Attachment 3).
2. Approve the Use Permit with modifications.
3. Deny the Use Permit.

RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1. Approve the Use Permit subject to the recommended Findings (Attachment 2) and Conditions of Approval (Attachment 3).

Prepared by: Cindy Hom, Assistant Planner

Approved by: Ryan Kuchenig, Senior Planner

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity and Noticing Map
2. Recommended Findings
3. Recommended Conditions of Approval
4. Site and Architectural Plans
5. Letter from the Applicant