

Planning Commission Staff Report

November 10, 2010
Item 6.c.

SUBJECT: PDR-933

APPLICANT: Tim Cotton

PROPERTY OWNER: Tim Cotton

PURPOSE: Application for Design Review approval to construct an approximately 3,972-square-foot two-story custom home with an attached two-car garage and an attached one-car garage.

GENERAL PLAN: Low Density Residential (< 2.0 du/ac)

ZONING: PUD – LDR (Planned Unit Development – Low Density Residential) District

LOCATION: 2517 Yolanda Court (Lot 3, Tract 7499)

EXHIBITS:

- A. Draft Conditions of Approval for PDR-933, November 10, 2010.
- B. Dated “Received October 13, 2010” including building floor plans and elevations, building materials and colors, landscape plan, grading and drainage plan, site plan, and green-point checklist.
- C. PUD-01-01M Development Plan Conditions of Approval and Design Guidelines.
- D. East Bay Regional Park District Letter.
- E. Location Map.
- F. Notification Area.

I. BACKGROUND

PUD-01 and PUD-01-01M

In 2001, the City Council approved PUD-01, the PUD Development Plan for Delco Builders to subdivide the existing properties on 2287 Vineyard Avenue and 2503 Vineyard Avenue into 38 lots for production single-family homes. Of the approved 38 lots for this development plan, six lots were located on the 2503 Vineyard Avenue site with four lots placed on the north side of Vineyard Avenue and two lots placed on the

south side of Vineyard Avenue. After the City Council approved PUD-01, the 2503 Vineyard Avenue property then came to be owned by John McCurdy. Although the McCurdy property was not technically part of the Vineyard Avenue Corridor Specific Plan, it was required to participate in the funding program for the Specific Plan including the construction of Vineyard Avenue and utility infrastructure.

In March 2003, the City Council approved PUD-01-01M, a modification of the PUD-01 development plan that changed the lotting pattern for the 2503 Vineyard Avenue site placing five lots (2505 – 2529 Yolanda Court) on the north side of Vineyard Avenue, accessed by Yolanda Court, a public street, and one lot (733 Vineyard Terrace) on the south side of Vineyard Avenue accessed from Vineyard Terrace through a shared access driveway. The modification also created design guidelines for custom homes to replace the production home designs. The conditions of approval also required that the custom home designs be submitted to the Planning Commission for review and approval.

The City then completed its review of the Tract 7499 final subdivision map and recorded the final map, subdivision agreement, and improvement plans. Mr. McCurdy paid the Vineyard Avenue Specific Plan fees and constructed the subdivision improvements including the final section of Vineyard Avenue, the landscape/noise attenuation berm between Yolanda Court and Vineyard Avenue, and Yolanda Court including utility infrastructure.

East Bay Regional Park District

PUD-01-01M incorporated the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) request that the Yolanda Court homes be limited as to height and window locations to minimize the visual impacts to the pond areas of the adjoining Shadow Cliffs Regional Park. In response to the park district, the City Council limited the maximum building height for Lot 3 to 23 feet and required the second floor living areas be built into the building's attic space with the second-story windows designed as dormers only facing the building's south side, i.e., Yolanda Court.

II. SITE DESCRIPTION

Subject Property

Lot 3, the subject property, is one of the five lots subdivided under Tract 7499. The subject site is a rectangular-shaped lot, approximately 14,000 square feet in area. It slopes gently downward from Yolanda Court to the north property line towards the Shadow Cliffs Regional Park property. A 10-foot wide private storm drain easement is located along the entire north property line with a concrete "V"-ditch and a buried storm drain pipe draining Lots 1 through 5. A 30-foot wide geotechnical/slope stability building setback is located along the north property line and is shown on Tract 7499.

Figure 1, on the following page, is an aerial photograph/location map of Tract 7499.



Figure 1: Location Map and Aerial Photograph

Adjacent Uses

Adjacent land uses include the Shadow Cliffs Regional Park property (EBRPD) to the north, vacant residential lots of Tract 7499 to the east and west, and residential uses to the south across Vineyard Avenue. Shadow Cliffs Regional Park was a former gravel quarry. When the quarry operations stopped, the property was conveyed to the EBRPD and was allowed to fill with water from the Arroyo Del Valle.

The former quarry created a steep 1:1 (45-degree angle) slope bank along the entire north side of the McCurdy development requiring a 30-foot building setback for habitable structures. This slope stability setback exceeds the 20-foot minimum rear yard setback required by the PUD development plan. Non-habitable structures such as pools, spas, or gazebos may be located to within 20 feet of the rear property line.

Figure 2, on the following page, is a photograph of the site from Yolanda Court.



Figure 2: Project Site from Yolanda Court

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed home is a two-story home with the second floor designed into the attic space. The proposed building includes a 3,972-square-foot first floor, a 794-square-foot second floor/attic area accessed by stairs, a 261-square-foot one-car garage, and a 412-square-foot two-car garage. The proposed building height is 22 feet, 4 inches. The home is designed with a traditional architectural style, consistent with the PUD design guidelines and surrounding homes.

The proposed second story/attic space will be accessed from the first floor by stairs and will be unfinished with the first construction phase – the applicant may convert the attic to habitable floor area at a later time with a building permit. In order to provide light and air to the second floor/attic, the applicant proposes two "ganged" windows at the top of the stair landing on the west side of the second floor/attic and one window on the right dormer facing Yolanda Court. The left dormer facing Yolanda Court provides light to the first floor entry.

IV. ANALYSIS

Site Development Standards

Site Development Standards

Table 1, on the following page, demonstrates the proposed project's conformance to the design standards specified for Lot 3 by the PUD development plan and design guidelines.

Table 1: PUD Development Standards for Lot 3

	Development Standards	Proposed Project²
Front Yard Setback	25 feet	25 feet to 30 feet ³
Side Yard Setback	10 feet	10 feet for both side yards
Rear Yard Setback	30 feet	40 feet – the rear building setback from the master bedroom can be reduced from 40 feet to 38 feet.
Building Height	23 feet, measured from the lowest to highest parts of the structure	22 feet, 4 inches
Floor Area Ratio¹ (FAR)	40% or 4,200 sq. ft., whichever is less.	29%, or 4,073 sq. ft. (127 sq. ft. of garage floor area is counted towards the FAR)
Second Story Windows	Limited to dormers facing the structure's south side – Yolanda Court	One window dormer faces Yolanda Court and one window is located on the building's west side. (Refer to discussion below.)

¹ 600 square feet of garage floor area is exempt from the floor area calculation.

² Verified from the site plan.

³ Varies due to the alignment of Yolanda Court.

Garage and Driveway

The two-car garage on the building's west side is 25 feet from the face-of-door to the property line and provides an estimated 24-foot back-out space to the edge of pavement. Staff estimates that up to four guest vehicles can park in front of the garages without using the driveway apron in addition to the on-street parking that will be allowed on the north side of Yolanda Court. Staff finds the proposed back-up distance is acceptable for a private driveway even though it may not technically conform to the 25-foot back-out standard applied to public parking areas. As recommended by the design guidelines, the driveway material is conditioned to include stamped, colored concrete matching the proposed color palette of the home. The applicant concurs with this requirement.

The driveway apron varies from a 15- to 20-percent slope and is acceptable to the City's Building and Engineering Divisions and to the Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Department. As conditioned, the applicant is required to replace the existing driveway curb cut to Yolanda Court to this site with a concrete curb. The applicant concurs with this requirement.

Master Bedroom

The applicant requests the ability to increase the depth of the master bedroom from one- to two-feet which will increase the building floor area from the 3,934 square feet stated on the design plans to 3,972 square feet and decrease the rear setback at the master bedroom from 40 feet to 38 feet. Figure 3, on the following page, is the proposed first floor plan for the home that shows the location of the master bedroom.

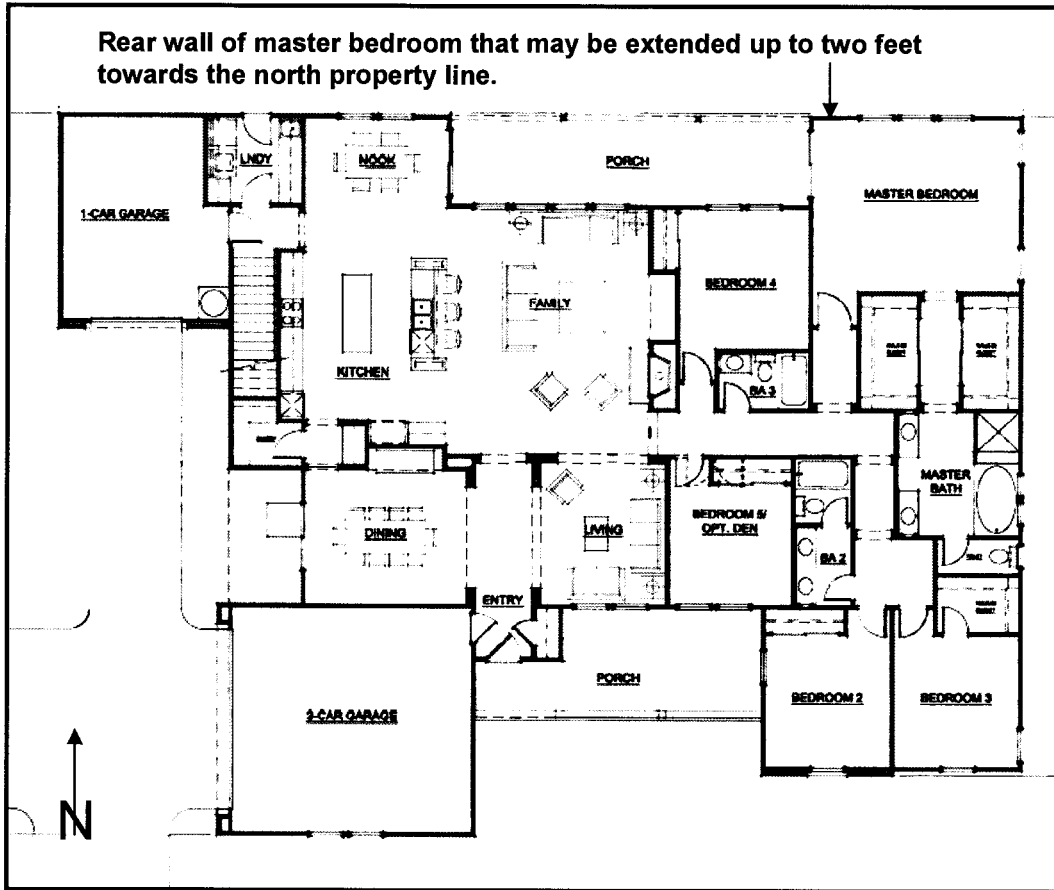


Figure 3: First Floor Plan

Second Floor Attic Window

The proposed building conforms to the PUD development plan standards for height, floor area, setbacks, and window placement except for the attic windows shown on the west (left) building elevation. Figure 4, below, includes the proposed attic windows on the west (left) elevation and an attic vent on the east (right) elevation.

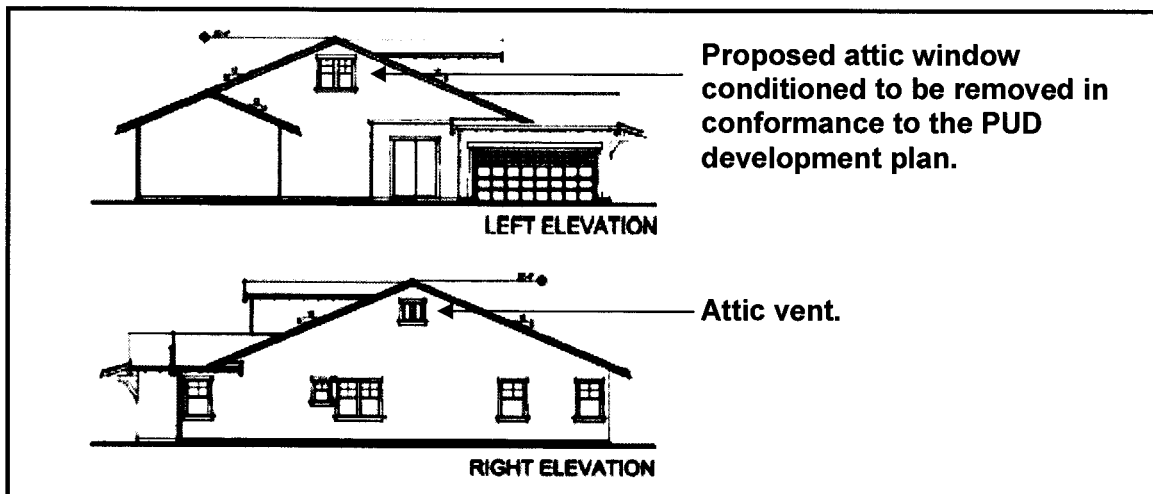


Figure 4: Left (West) and Right (East) Building Elevations

Figure 5, below, includes the second floor/attic floor plan.

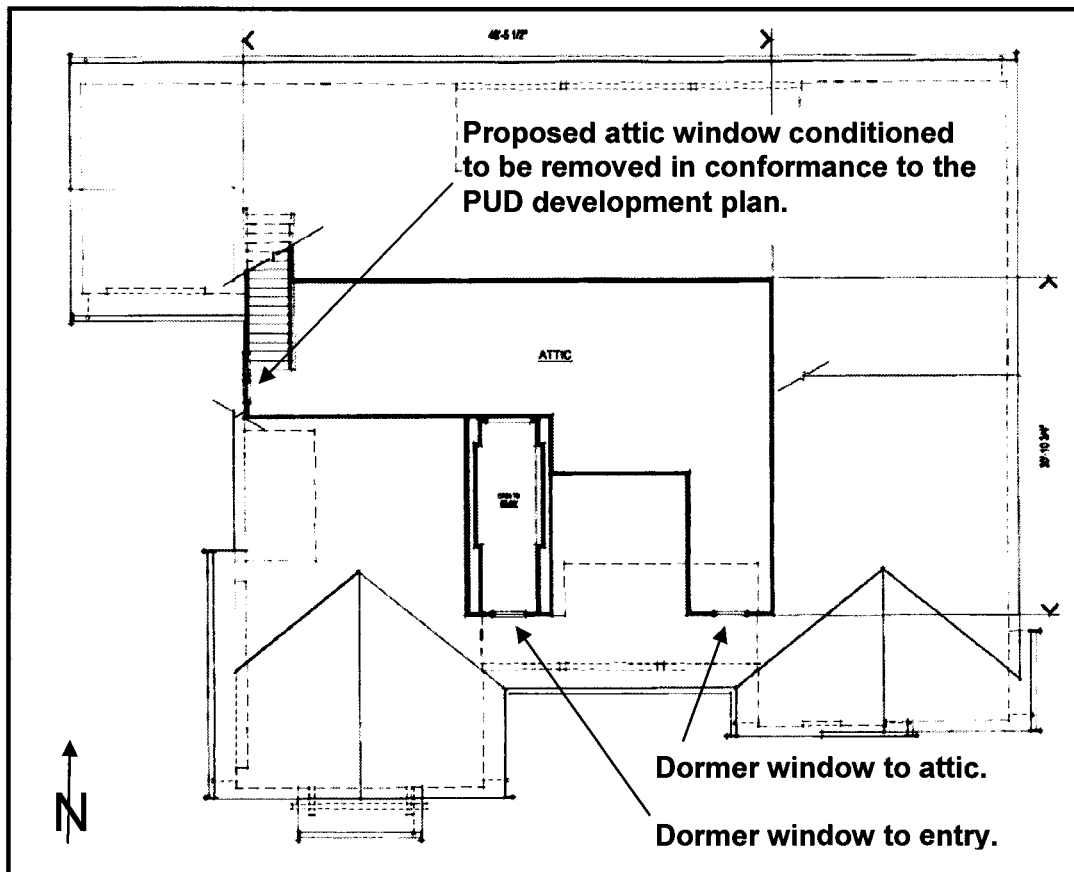


Figure 5: Second Floor/Attic Floor Plan

The applicant requests the two “ganged” windows on the west (left) building elevation, in addition to the window shown with the dormer, to provide natural light and air to the second floor/attic area for future living area including bedrooms. The PUD development plan, however, specifies that the second-floor/attic windows for this lot shall be designed only as dormers facing south, i.e., towards Yolanda Court. Therefore, as conditioned, staff recommends that the second floor/attic windows be removed from the west building elevation in order for the Planning Commission to be able to approve the proposal in compliance with the PUD development plan and design guidelines on this issue.

The applicant concurs with the staff recommendation in order to move the application forward, and will be submitting a modification of the PUD development plan to modify this requirement in order to add the windows to the west building elevation and possibly to the east building elevation. As conditioned, the design review application does not require the development plan modification. The applicant intends to address the Planning Commission at the public hearing on this issue.

Exhibit D, attached, states the Park District’s preference that the proposed project should conform to the standards of the PUD development plan.

Building Design

Figure 6, below, is the front building elevation for the proposed residence. The rear and side building elevations will use the same color palette and window trim detailing.



Figure 6: Front Building Elevation

The proposed design features traditional style architecture with stucco wall finishes, stone accent material on a portion of the front building elevation, and warm-toned colors. The second floor/attic area is designed into the roof area. Wall colors include taupe and beige and the trim colors include maroon and dark brown. The proposed roof includes a combination of 4:12 and 5:12 roof pitches. The roof material is flat concrete tile, charcoal brown in color. Architecture elements include wood trim around all doors and windows, a stone faced seat wall by the front porch, a wood/tile awning on the front building elevation, vertically hung windows with quarter-grids on the windows' upper half portions, and paneled garage doors.

Staff considers the proposed building design including materials, colors, and detailing to be consistent with the requirements of the design guidelines for varied building forms that achieve visual interest, that complement the appearance of the nearby neighborhoods, and that blends with the natural setting of the Vineyard Avenue area. The Yolanda Court design guidelines specified similar roof materials and colors for the homes to create a continuity of building designs. The proposed home is consistent with the previous approvals that used an earth tone color palette and concrete roof tiles.

Landscaping and Fencing

The proposed landscape plan includes a list of planting species that are attractive and appropriate for the site, including a mix of native and non-native plant species emphasizing low water use, and that group trees and shrubs in a series of randomly-spaced clusters. A detailed landscape plan was not provided for the rear yard and portions of the side yards and will be required with the building permit. As conditioned, a final landscaping/irrigation plan for the front, side, and rear yard areas of the property will be submitted for review and approval by the Planning Division prior to the issuance of a building permit. As also conditioned, the landscape/irrigation plan is required to conform to the California State Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance. The applicant concurs with these requirements.

As allowed by the PUD development plan, fencing will include open fencing on the rear property line and a solid good neighbor style fence on the side property lines. As conditioned, the final fence plan will be submitted with the building permit. The applicant concurs with these requirements.

Grading, Drainage, and Utilities

The proposed grading plan is designed to complement the natural topography of the site. The site will be graded to place the building pad approximately six to four feet lower than Yolanda Court and to drain the site towards the existing concrete "V"-ditch along the rear property line. The "V"-ditch, in turn, is connected to an outfall structure to the ponds on the Shadow Cliffs Regional Park property. A three-foot tall retaining wall is provided in the front setback area to accommodate the proposed home.

As conditioned, the roof areas will drain to the landscape areas to pre-filter the storm water runoff before it enters the storm drain system. As conditioned, an erosion control plan will be provided to the Planning Division for review and approval prior to the issuance of a building permit. The applicant concurs with these requirements.

Green Building Measures

All new residential homes are required to include green building measures in their design, utilizing the Alameda County Waste Management Authority's (ACWMA) Green Points guide to determine the specific green building measures to be designed into the home. The attached Green Building checklist shows that the proposed development would achieve 60 points thereby exceeding the 50 point minimum identified by the City ordinance. As conditioned, the final Green Building measures and score will be determined with the review of the building permit application. The State of California's Green Building Standards Code, "CALGreen", shall apply if applicable.

East Bay Regional Park District

Staff referred the project to the East Bay Regional Park District for comment. Exhibit D is attached and states the Park District's preference that the proposed project should conform to the standards of the PUD development plan.

V. PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notices were sent to the property owners and tenants within a 1,000-foot radius of the property, including the East Bay Regional Park District. Exhibit F is the notification area. Exhibit D is the comment letter from the East Bay Regional Park District. Staff has not received any other written or verbal comments on the proposed project. Staff will forward comments to the Planning Commission as they are received.

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Environmental review for the proposed project was completed with the approved Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for PUD-01 in conformance with the standards of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). There are no changes to the project or to the surrounding area that involve new significant environmental effects

or that increase the severity of previously identified effects. Furthermore, there is no new information of substantial importance which was unknown at the time that the IS/MND was approved by the City Council. Therefore, no new environmental document accompanies this staff report.

VII. CONCLUSION

The proposed home is an attractive addition to the Vineyard Avenue area and is designed or conditioned to conform to the PUD development plan and design guidelines. The proposed project is compatible in terms of site and building design with the development pattern of the surrounding neighborhoods.

VIII. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission approve PDR-933 subject to the draft conditions of approval listed in Exhibit A.

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