



Planning Commission Staff Report

July 9, 2008
Item 5.b.

- SUBJECT:** PDR-717
- APPLICANT/
OWNER:** Tarlochan Sidhu
- PURPOSE:** Application for design review approval to construct an approximately 4,716-square-foot two-story single-family home on an approximately 18,285-square-foot site.
- GENERAL
PLAN:** North Sycamore Specific Plan – Low Density Residential (< 2.0 du/ac)
- ZONING:** PUD - LDR (Planned Unit Development – Low Density Residential) District.
- LOCATION:** 6047 Sycamore Terrace (Lot #3 of PUD-42).
- ATTACHMENTS:**
1. Exhibit A, dated “Received February 12, 2008”, including Title Sheet/ Design Review; Site Plan; First and Second Floor Plans; Building Elevations and Colors/Materials Board; Civil Plans including Grading/Drainage, Erosion Control, Pollution Prevention; Landscape Plans including Landscape Design, Hardscape Design, Irrigation Design, and Details; and Lighting Plan.
 2. Exhibit B, Draft Conditions of Approval, dated July 9, 2008.
 3. Exhibit C, Location Map.
 4. Exhibit D, Ordinance No. 1914 for PUD-42
 5. Exhibit E, Bach Parcel Final Development Standards and Guidelines
 6. Exhibit F, Public comment.

I. BACKGROUND

Background Summary

The applicant, Tarlochan Sidhu, proposes to construct an approximately 4,716-square-foot, two-story home on an 18,285-square-foot (0.42-acre) site in the Sycamore Terrace development off the north side of Sycamore Creek Road.

On March 15, 2005, the City Council introduced Ordinance 1914 approving PUD-42, a four-lot custom home development – three new homes plus one existing home – on 1.82 acres in conformance to the North Sycamore Specific Plan.

The location and grade elevation of this site, Lot No. 3, concerned the Greene family regarding their views and privacy. The City Council established a series of lot-specific development standards and design guidelines on the size, height, and location of the future home on this site to address those concerns.

The development standards for PUD-42 are site-specific and were designed to minimize the impacts of development to adjoining neighbors. The design guidelines limited the maximum building height to 27 feet or a building height equaling an approximate elevation of 407.00 feet NGVD, whichever is less. The subject property is not covered by view shed easements. The PUD development plan requires the home designs in this development be reviewed by the Planning Commission.

II. SUBJECT PROPERTY

Figure 1, below, is an aerial photograph/location map of the site and surrounding area.

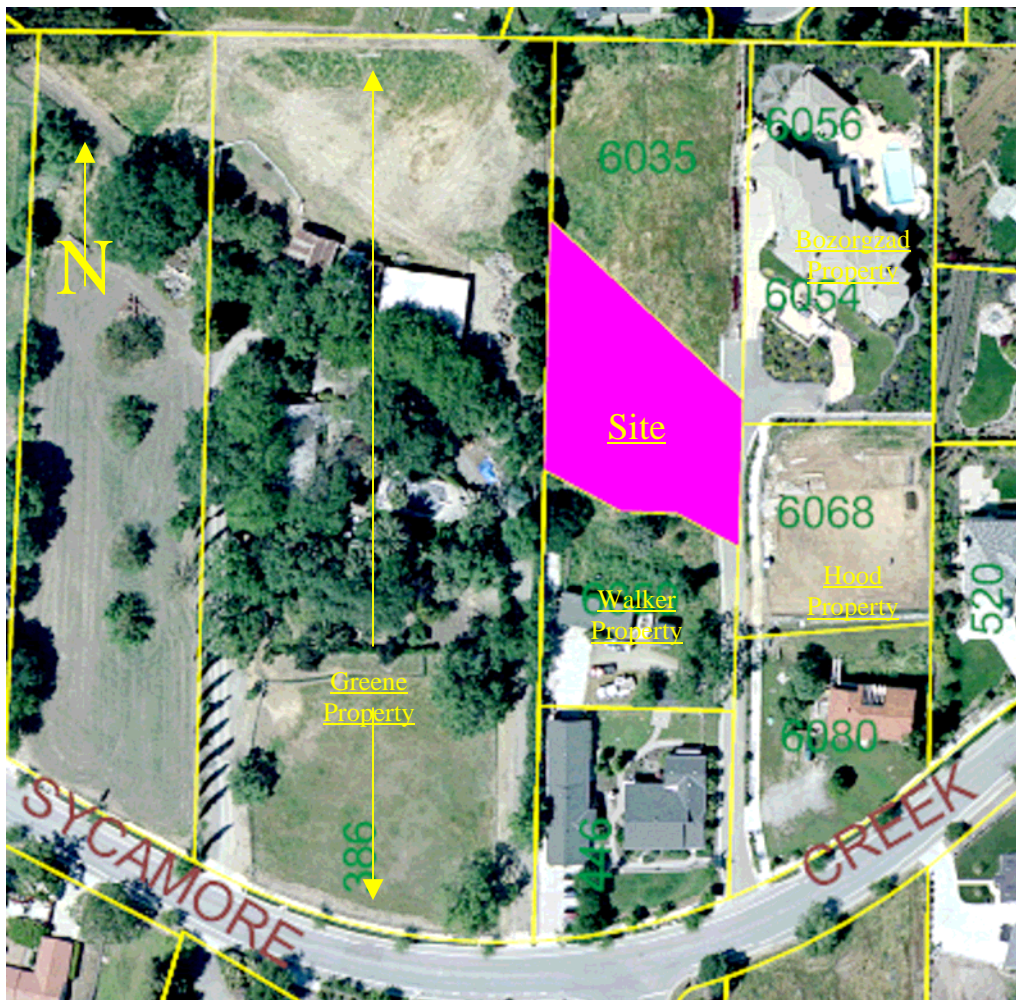


Figure 1: Aerial Photograph/Location Map of the Site and Surrounding Properties

The subject property is a vacant site surrounded by vacant and developed residential properties. Access to the site is from Sycamore Terrace, a private street connecting to Sycamore Creek Way. The site is graded with a flat pad area set at a datum elevation of 379.25 feet NGVD. From the pad, the site slopes down from the pad to the west and south property lines and up from the pad to the north property line.

Figures 2 through 6 on the following pages are photographs of the surrounding properties. Photographs of the site with the story pole installation are in the Building Design sub-section of the staff report.



Figure 2: Greene property from the southwest corner of the building pad.



Figure 2: Greene property from the southwest side of the building pad.



Figure 3: Greene property from the central west side of the building pad.



Figure 4: Greene property from the northwest side of the building pad.



Figure 5: Bozorgzad home from the northeast side of the project site.



Figure 6: Hood home from the east side from the project site.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Building Design

The applicants' proposal includes the following:

- Construction of an approximately 4,716-square-foot, two-story home with an attached three-car garage. The narrow shape of the buildable pad area limits the degree that the second-floor areas can be set back behind the first floor areas.
- All private recreation areas would be located on the north side of the property.
- Three guest parking spaces would be provided on the driveway apron.
- The proposed height of the two-story portion would be 27 feet, a datum elevation of 406.25 feet, measured to the top-cap of the tile material. This number corrects the height stated on the building elevations that was measured to the height of the ridge beam.
- The project has been designed with 75 estimated 'LEED' points exceeding the City's minimum 50-point requirement.
- Landscaping will feature drought-tolerant plant species reducing water consumption.

The proposed building design follows a “neo-Spanish” architectural style. Colors and building materials would include medium-brown-colored stucco walls and concrete roof tiles. A lighter beige color would be used for the building trim.

IV. DISCUSSION

Site Design and Development Standards

The site was graded when the subdivision improvements were installed, resulting in a narrow building pad area with a relatively large slope bank facing the Greene property and a long, narrow buildable area for the home. Proceeding in a north to south direction, the present flat pad on the property varies from 7 feet higher to 10 feet, 6 inches higher than the west property line. The building pad on this site is located closer to Sycamore Terrace and, therefore, farther away from the Greene property.

The proposed home is governed by the site-specific development standards of the PUD development plan. Figure 7, below, compares the proposed development standards to the required by the PUD development plan.

Figure 7: Comparison of the Proposed Development Standards to the Development Standards of PUD-42

	Requirement	Proposal
Front Yard Setback:	25 feet	29 feet to 38 feet.
North Side Yard Setback¹:	15 feet from the north property line.	16 feet to 21 feet.
South Side Yard Setback:	15 feet from the south property line. 10 feet from the top-of-bank or 25 feet from the centerline of Sycamore Creek, whichever is greater.	24 feet to 28 feet from the south property line. 54 feet to 61 feet from the centerline of Sycamore Creek.
Rear Yard Setback:	25 feet from the west property line.	42 feet to 43 feet.
Maximum Building Height	27 feet for a two-story house, measured from grade to the highest ridge, or 407 feet NGVD, whichever is less.	27 feet as conditioned to allow for the top-cap of the roof tile, which equals 406.25 feet NGVD.
Floor Area Ratio²:	30% of 18,285 square feet not to exceed 5,000 square feet. Up to 600 square feet of garage floor area is exempt from the floor area calculation.	26.7% for 4,716.23 square feet of building floor area plus 167.01 square feet of non-exempt garage floor area equaling 4883.24 square feet.

¹ For this site, there shall be a minimum 10-foot setback from the top-edge of the bank of Sycamore Creek or a 25-foot setback from the centerline of the creek, whichever is greater. The minimum front yard and/or side yard setbacks shall be measured from the rolled-curb on Sycamore Terrace.

² The Floor Area Ratio (FAR) includes primary and accessory structures but excludes up to 600 square feet of garage area. Portions of garage floor area over 600 square feet would be included in the FAR calculation.

As shown in Table 7, the proposal conforms to the applicable development standards established by PUD-42 for this site.

Building Design

The proposed building design implements the development's design guidelines. A summary follows:

- The proposed design compliments the designs of the existing and recently approved homes on Sycamore Terrace and works with these structures' designs to achieve an eclectic mix of design styles.
- The proposed building form follows the generally rectangular shape of the building pad.
- The building's location and floor design provides a northwest view from the second floor master bedroom area and terrace.
- A 4:12 roof pitch is used.
- The proposed roof and building wall colors emphasize dark warm tones minimizing reflectivity.

Building heights and façades are nicely articulated and varied. Wall façades are detailed and textured with stone, wrought-iron style trim and detailing, wood door and window trim. Additional trim elements include a decorative metal chimney cap and divided light windows. Roof elements, trim detailing, and window/door detailing are continued from the front elevation to the side and rear building elevations. In staff's opinion, the applicant has achieved a "four-sided" architectural design concept for the proposed structure.

Landscaping

The proposed landscape plan is composed primarily of native species for planting as a water efficient landscape concept. The proposed non-native species are drought tolerant. There would be minimal turf area to reduce water usage for landscaping and pervious paving to reduce storm water runoff. The proposed plan was reviewed and accepted by the City's landscape architect and is consistent with the development standards adopted.

A combination of 15-gallon and 24-inch box-size Chinese pistache, raywood ash, and live oak trees – a combination of deciduous and evergreen species – are proposed along the south property line. No trees, however, are proposed on the slope bank adjoining the west side of the property.

Grading, Drainage, and Urban Storm water Runoff

The proposed dwelling would be located on the existing, flat portion of the site thereby minimizing grading. The elevations of portions of the building's first floor would be lower than the grade elevation of Sycamore Terrace.

The applicant would install a bio-retention swale along the west and south sides of the building pad to pretreat the storm water runoff before entering Sycamore Creek. Storm water runoff from the structure and driveway would be conveyed to the swale and from the swale to the concrete "V"-ditch along the west property line, installed with the subdivision, and then to Sycamore Creek. The storm water runoff measures will be reviewed

in detail when the building permit plans are reviewed. Staff anticipates the runoff from landscape irrigation would be negligible based upon the applicant's use of low-water requiring planting and pervious paving.

Green Building Measures

The applicants have submitted a preliminary green building analysis indicating 75 points for the proposed home whereas only 50 of the points need to be met. As conditioned, the applicants will submit a revised list of green building measures with the building permit plans and application.

Greene Family

Mary Greene has communicated her concerns to staff regarding the design of the proposed home.

Prior to submitting the proposed design, the applicant had reviewed the public record on the PUD development plan, noted the Greene family's concerns, and replied to their concerns by limiting the second-floor areas facing the west property line to the second-floor terrace off the Master Bedroom and to the windows of Bedrooms #3 and #4. Except for two bathroom windows, all other second floor windows face north, east, and south. Additionally, all private recreation areas would face the northwest property line towards the upper pasture area of the Greene property.

In reply to the concerns expressed on height, the applicant installed story poles defining the north/south ridge of the proposed home and the outline of the western-facing building wall. Staff considers the story poles – a three dimensional model of the proposed home – to fulfill the PUD recommendation of view analyses or sight lines to determine the impact if any to the Greene property from these properties. Figures 8 through 11, on the following pages, are photographs of the story pole installation including, where applicable, the Greene property.



Figure 8: Story pole installation and Greene property.



Figure 9: Story pole installation looking south from property line.



Figure 10: Story pole installation and Greene property.



Figure 11: Story pole installation looking north from property line.

Figures 12 and 13, below and on the following page, are photographs taken through the story pole installation looking towards the Greene property.



Figure 12: Looking through the north end of the home towards the Green property.



Figure 13: Looking through the south end of the home towards the Green property.

The photographs on the previous pages illustrate the tree cover on the Green property that would buffer the visibility of the proposed home. The applicant believes that the existing tree cover on the Greene property would be sufficient to address the Greene family concerns regarding the proposed home's visibility.

However, staff does not concur with the applicant and, therefore, recommends the installation of a combination of 15-gallon and 24-inch box size evergreen trees on the slope bank facing the west side of the property to buffer the appearance of the proposed home. To accommodate the applicant's proposal for the Master Bedroom terrace and a view from this terrace to the southwest, staff also recommends that the locations of these trees maintain a reasonable view corridor from the terrace looking southwest. Staff believes that these trees would augment the significant tree planting on the Greene property to buffer the view of the proposed home from the Greene property.

The attached photographs of the proposed home provided by Mary Green show a portion of the building's southwest corner – the area of the second-floor Master Bedroom terrace – that would be visible to her property. Staff notes that the guidelines encourage the applicants on these properties to site their homes based upon views. Mary Greene was initially uncomfortable with staff photographing the story pole installation from her property. She has now stated her permission to staff to enter her property to photograph the story poles. The staff-prepared photographs will be provided to the Planning Commission before the meeting.

Lighting

To address a concern of the Greene family on the development of this property regarding light and glare, staff has conditioned the site development to shield all exterior lighting including landscape lighting directing it downward and away from the property lines so as not to shine onto adjoining properties, and to only use low luminosity accent lighting. Staff will review a lighting plan with the building permit to verify the implementation of these requirements.

Window Glazing

Staff notes that the surrounding area is developed with two-story homes with west-facing second floor elevations with conventional windows. The non-reflective windows used on residential buildings lack the highly reflective mirrored finish of commercial windows thereby reducing potential glare. Hence, staff believes that the potential glare from the structure would be minimal.

V. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposal is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality ACT (CEQA) under Section 15302, Replacement or Reconstruction, Section 15303(a) (e), New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, and Section 15332, In-Fill Development Projects, of the CEQA Guidelines. The Class 3 exemption covers the construction and location of up to three single-family residences in an urbanized area. Therefore, no new environmental document accompanies this staff report.

VI. PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMENTS

The June 25th public hearing was noticed to all residents to a distance of 1,000 feet from the site.

Attached is the letter from Mary Greene stating her comments and concerns on the proposal, and photographs taken by Mary Greene of the story pole installations from her property. A summary of the Greene family concerns follows:

- The proposed house is too large.
- There are no trees planted on the slope bank between the proposed home and the Green family property.
- The large size of the windows facing the Greene family and that these windows may reflect sunlight and glare onto the Greene property.
- The house should be redesigned with the second floor moved closer to the building's east side facing Sycamore Terrace and with no windows facing the west property line.

These concerns are addressed in the "**DISCUSSION**" section of the staff report.

Upon submittal of the application, the applicant and his design consultant met with the Greene family to discuss their concerns with the design of the proposed home. Based upon these concerns, the applicant installed story poles defining the north/south ridge of the proposed home and the outline of the western-facing building wall.

Ms. Greene also stated to staff that the Bozorgzad, Hood, and Walker families have expressed to her their concerns regarding the size and height of the proposed home. However, as of the writing of the staff report, staff has not received any written or verbal communications from the Bozorgzad, Hood, or Walker families. Any letters and/or emails received after the staff report is published will be forwarded to the Planning Commission.

VII. CONCLUSION

The proposed home is well designed, architecturally attractive, relates well to surrounding properties, and implements the applicable design standards and design guidelines of the underlying PUD development plan for height, floor area, and the building's form, design, and detailing.

The applicant has replied to the concerns expressed by the Green family with the proposed building design: only the second floor master bedroom terrace and the windows of two other bedrooms face the west property line; the remaining second floor windows face north, east, and south; building colors are dark having low reflectivity; private recreation areas are placed on the northwesterly side of the site facing the upper pasture of the Greene property. As conditioned, evergreen trees are to be planted on the slope

bank adjoining the west property line to buffer the building's visibility, and low-intensity shielded building and rear yard lighting are required.

Overall, staff believes that the proposed project merits a favorable action by the Planning Commission.

VIII. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission approve design review Case PDR-717 for a new two-story, single-family home with an approximately 4,716 square feet of living area on an approximately 18,285-square-foot vacant property subject to Exhibit "B", Draft Conditions of Approval.

Staff Planner: Marion Pavan, 925.931.5610, or mpavan@ci.pleasanton.ca.us