



Planning Commission Staff Report

August 23, 2017
Item 6.a.

SUBJECT: P17-0372

**APPLICANTS/
PROPERTY OWNERS/
APPELLANTS:** David and Sue Robles

PURPOSE: Appeal of the Zoning Administrator's approval of an Administrative Design Review application to: (1) convert an existing unconditioned loft into an approximately 720-square-foot second-story addition; and (2) increase the roof height of the existing residence from 20 feet to 25 feet.

LOCATION: 3552 Yellowstone Court

GENERAL PLAN: Medium Density Residential

ZONING: R-1-6,500 (One-Family Residential) District

EXHIBITS:

- A. [July 12, 2017 Planning Commission Staff Report](#) with the following Exhibits:
 - 1. Zoning Administrator approval letter and conditions of approval dated "May 25, 2017"
 - 2. Approved project plans, dated "Received May 5, 2017"
 - 3. Appeal letter from David and Sue Robles dated "Received June 9, 2017"
 - 4. Zoning Administrator hearing minutes dated May 25, 2017
 - 5. Photos from Glen and Shoni Johnson dated "Received May 25, 2017"
 - 6. Letter from Ed Broome dated "Received May 26, 2017"
 - 7. Arborist Report prepared by Dryad, LLC dated "Received May 4, 2017"
 - 8. Police calls for service log
 - 9. Letter from Minh Lee dated "Received July 2, 2017"
 - 10. Location and Notification Map
- B. [Revised project plans, dated "Received August 8, 2017"](#)
- C. [Revised DRAFT Conditions of Approval dated August 23, 2017](#)
- D. [Planning Commission Meeting Minutes dated July 12, 2017](#)
- E. [Location and Notification Map](#)

RECOMMENDATION

Deny the appeal of the Zoning Administrator's approval of Case P17-0372, and approve the revised project as shown in the revised project plans attached as Exhibit B (dated "Received August 8, 2017"), subject to the revised conditions of approval attached as Exhibit C (dated August 23, 2017).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/BACKGROUND/HISTORY

At the July 12, 2017 meeting, the Planning Commission heard the appeal filed by the applicants/appellants. At that meeting, the Planning Commission continued the item and directed the applicant/appellant to work with staff to modify the design of the proposed addition. Specifically, the Planning Commission directed the applicant to undertake the following design modifications:

- A reduction in the overall massing/area of the second-floor addition, possibly by reducing the number of bedrooms;
- Elimination of any new second-floor windows on the north elevation; and
- Improved architectural detailing on the front façade of the addition.

The proposed design modifications in response to the Planning Commission's direction are described below. Additionally, staff has attached the revised project plans as Exhibit B to this report. For comparison purposes, the original project plans are also attached to this report as Exhibit A.2.

Staff is recommending that the Planning Commission deny the appeal of the Zoning Administrator's approval of Case P17-0372, and approve the project subject to the revised project plans and revised conditions of approval.

The key options that should be considered by the Commission include: approve the modified project, deny the modified project, or seek additional changes to the modified project.

For additional project background, information, and analysis, please see Exhibits A through D.

REVISED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The revised project would: (1) convert an existing unconditioned loft (attic space) into an approximately 720-square-foot second-story addition; and (2) increase the roof height of the existing residence from 20 feet to 25 feet. The revised project includes: one new 4-foot-wide by 3-foot-4-inch-tall window that would be installed on the second-story of the south-facing (left side) elevation; the elimination of an existing 5-foot-wide by 2-foot-tall window on the second-story of the east-facing (front) elevation and replacement with a louvered vent; and the elimination of an existing 5-foot-wide by 3-foot-tall window that would be replaced by two new 4-foot-wide by 3-foot-4-inch-tall windows on the second-story of the west-facing (rear) elevation. The new square footage within the proposed second-story includes a bathroom and three bedrooms (after construction of the project there would be a total of six bedrooms within the entire residence). There would be no change to the current setbacks. The height of the existing residence would increase from 20 to 25 feet (measured from the property grade to the ridge of the roof). The new square footage added to the existing house (approximately 720 square feet)

would result in a 38.2% floor area ratio (FAR) on the approximately 6,068-square-foot-lot.¹ The project would generally match the exterior materials and colors of the existing dwelling by incorporating vertical wood siding on the front of the addition, earth-tone colored stucco on the rear and sides of the addition, wood trim around all new and existing doors and windows on both floors, and a composition shingle roof. Compared to the previous submittal reviewed by the Planning Commission, the interior square footage of the revised project would be reduced by approximately 176 square feet, and the total number of bedrooms would be reduced from eight to six. In addition, the revised project would result in the removal of the same two Heritage trees identified for removal in the previous project.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL PROPOSAL VERSUS THE CURRENT PROPOSAL

At the July 12, 2017 meeting, the Planning Commission directed the applicant/appellant to work with staff to modify the design of the proposed addition to reduce the overall massing/area of the second floor addition, possibly by reducing the number of bedrooms; eliminate any new second-story windows on the north elevation; and improve the architectural detailing of the project along the front elevation facing Yellowstone Court. The specific design areas of focus, as well as the modifications made to the project plans, are detailed below. Please see the July 12, 2017 Planning Commission meeting minutes attached as Exhibit D for more information.

Massing Reduction

Planning Commission Direction: The Planning Commission directed that the massing and area of the proposed second-floor addition be reduced, possibly by reducing the overall number of bedrooms. The Planning Commission noted that the size and height of the addition, while conforming to the prescribed development standards, were too large compared to other homes in the area, especially those that also had second floors.

Applicant/Appellant Response: The overall size of the second-floor addition was reduced by approximately 176 square feet compared to the previous proposal (yielding an FAR of 38.2%). This reduction was primarily achieved by the elimination of one bedroom and a reconfiguration of the floor plan. The building area was reduced by pushing the addition's second floor wall back approximately 5 feet, 8 inches from the front of the house. Additionally, pushing the front portion of the second floor addition back from the front of the house results in less vertical exposure of the front two-story wall due to the extension of the first floor roof.

The reduction in massing and area of the proposed second-floor addition and the first-floor roofline extension would improve the design of the addition as viewed from Yellowstone Court and reduce visual impacts on the adjacent neighbors, specifically those neighbors immediately adjacent to the north and south of the subject site. No visual changes would occur on the rear (west) elevation.

As a result of these changes to the proposed interior space, the current project contains six bedrooms (compared to the previous project, which contained a total of eight bedrooms). The existing Master Bedroom and Bedroom #2 on the first floor would be combined into one new Master Bedroom on the first floor and one bedroom would be eliminated entirely from the

¹ The floor area ratio (FAR) is calculated using the sum of the gross horizontal area of the floors of a building and its accessory structures on the same site excluding: basement or cellar areas used only for storage; space used for off-street parking or loading; and steps, patios, decks, terraces, porches, and exterior balconies, if not enclosed on more than three sides. The gross horizontal area of structures is divided by the horizontal area of a site to yield the FAR.

proposed second-floor addition. As such, a total of six bedrooms are currently proposed: three bedrooms on the first floor and three bedrooms within the proposed addition on the second-floor.

North-Facing Window

Planning Commission Direction: Consistent with Zoning Administrator Condition of Approval No. 3, the Planning Commission directed that the second-floor window on the north elevation be eliminated due to privacy concerns expressed by the adjacent neighbors to the north.

Applicant/Appellant Response: The proposed second-floor window on the north facing elevation was eliminated in the current proposal. No other new windows are proposed on the north-facing elevation on either floor.

Additionally, the applicant has eliminated one of the two originally proposed windows on the second-floor of the south-facing elevation and the attic window on the front elevation facing Yellowstone Court.

Architectural Detailing

Planning Commission Direction: The Planning Commission requested that architectural detailing more consistent with the existing home and the surrounding neighborhood be provided on the front elevation facing Yellowstone Court.

Applicant/Appellant Response: Vertical wood siding has been added to the second-floor wall facing Yellowstone Court. This vertical siding is consistent with the vertical siding already present on the first-floor wall facing Yellowstone Court, and will help unify the second floor addition with the existing structure. A large louvered vent has also been added to the center of the second-floor wall to provide more architectural detailing to the front elevation. Additionally, wood trim, consistent with that already present on the front elevation of the residence, has been added on all new and existing doors and windows on all four sides of the residence (first and second floors). Stucco is still proposed on the rear and side elevations of the proposed addition, matching the first floor wall material and consistent with other residences in the neighborhood.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

Notices for this hearing were sent to surrounding property owners and tenants within a 1,000-foot radius of the site for the Planning Commission hearing. Staff has provided the location and noticing map as Exhibit E for reference. At the time this report was published, staff had not received any new public comments.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This project is categorically exempt (Section 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities) from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

The revised project complies with the development standards prescribed by the PMC and is more compatible with the existing home and surrounding neighborhood compared to the original project. Staff believes the revised project reflects the direction provided by the Planning Commission and would be more consistent with the design character of the neighborhood.

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