

Planning Commission Staff Report

February 22, 2017
Item 5.b.

SUBJECT: P16-0916

**APPLICANT/
OWNER:** Tarlochan Sidhu

PURPOSE: Application for Design Review approval to construct an approximately 4,800-square-foot, two-story, single-family residence with an approximately 767-square-foot attached garage

GENERAL PLAN: Low Density Residential

SPECIFIC PLAN: North Sycamore Specific Plan - Low Density Residential

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

LOCATION: 6047 Sycamore Terrace

EXHIBITS:

- A. [Draft Conditions of Approval](#)
- B. [Proposed Development Plans](#)
- C. [Ordinance No. 1914 for PUD-42 and Bach Parcel Final Development Standards and Guidelines](#)
- D. [Location and Notification Map](#)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Design Review application P16-0916 subject to the draft conditions of approval listed in Exhibit A.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The applicant/property owner requests Design Review approval to construct an approximately 4,800-square-foot, two-story custom home on one lot of a four-lot subdivision. New homes within the subdivision require Planning Commission review and approval. As such, the Design Review application is before the Planning Commission for consideration.

BACKGROUND

North Sycamore Specific Plan. The project site is located in the North Sycamore Specific Plan (NSSP) area. The City Council adopted the North Sycamore Specific Plan (NSSP) in June, 1992. In September of 1992, the NSSP area was rezoned with several PUD designations reflecting the NSSP land use plan, but without a PUD development plan for any portion of the Specific Plan. The Specific Plan area was annexed to the City in June of 1993. The land use

for this property as specified in the NSSP is Planned Unit Development – Low Density Residential (PUD-LDR). The intent of the PUD-LDR land use category is to allow for subdivision and development of parcels at a density that is harmonious with rural and suburban uses both within and surrounding the NSSP area.

PUD Approval. On April 5, 2005, the City Council adopted Ordinance 1914 approving PUD-42, a four-lot custom home development (comprising one existing home and three new single-family residential lots) on an approximately 1.82-acre site located on the north side of Sycamore Road within the NSSP area. Since the PUD approval, two new homes (Lots 2 and 4) have been constructed. The project site is the last vacant lot.

The PUD approval included “Bach Parcel Final Development Standards and Guidelines” (Design Guidelines). The intent of the Design Guidelines is to provide design criteria to guide the architectural and landscaping designs of the four-lot PUD development. As such, the approved Design Guidelines provide design criteria and development standards for the development as well as site specific design requirements, such as building height, exterior building materials, planting, etc.

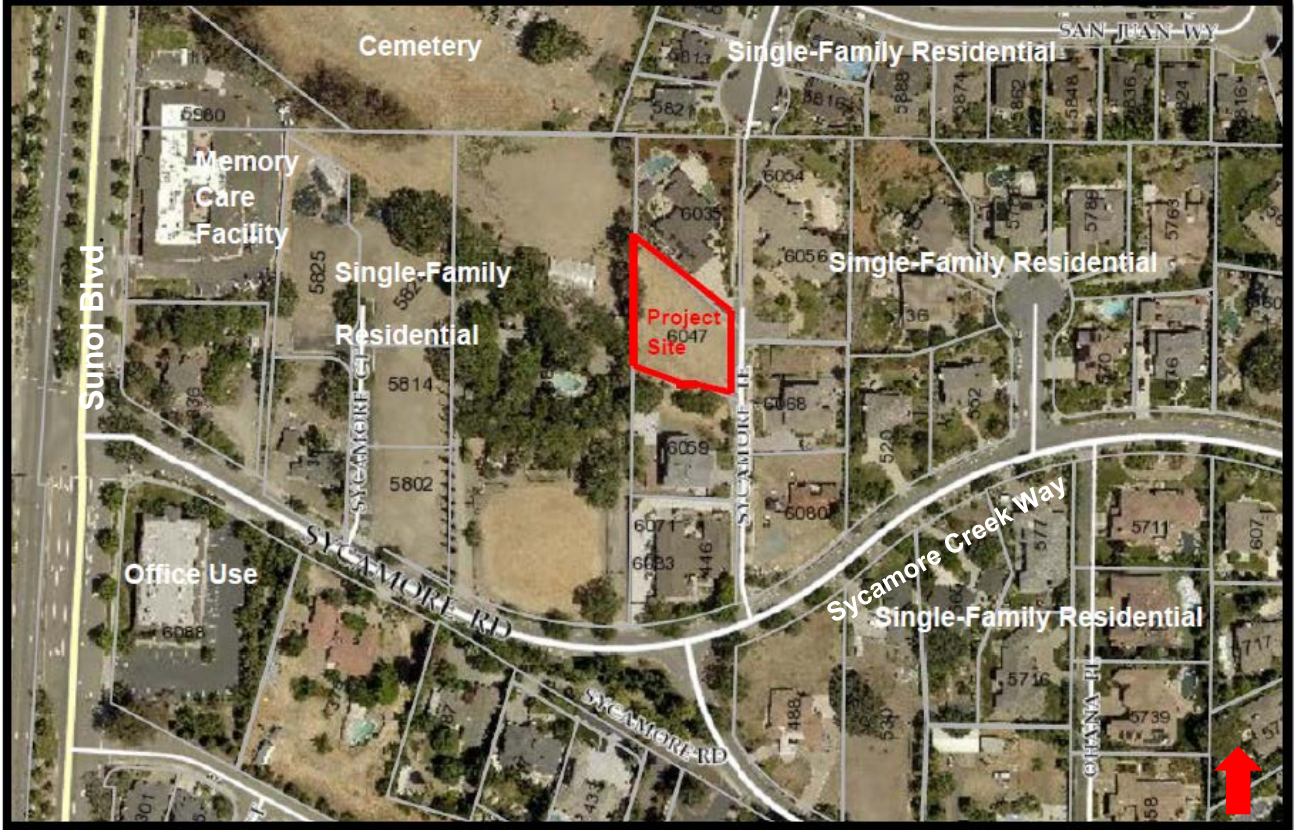
Previous Design Review Approval. On July 9, 2008, the Planning Commission approved a design review application from Mr. Tarlochan Sidhu for the construction of an approximately 4,716-square-foot, two-story, single-family residence on the project site. The adjoining neighbor to the west, the Greenes at 386 Sycamore Road, had expressed concerns regarding the visibility of the proposed home. A condition of approval required evergreen trees to be planted on the slope bank along the west side of the property to help screen views of the proposed home from the Greenes’ property. These required trees, along with the existing trees on the Greenes’ property, were determined by the Planning Commission to adequately screen views of the proposed home from the Greenes’ property.

Mr. Sidhu did not obtain a building permit within the allotted timeframe and the design review approval subsequently expired. Mr. Sidhu again proposes to construct a new home on the vacant lot. The currently proposed home design is similar to the previously-approved design.

SUBJECT PROPERTY

The project site is an approximately 18,285-square-foot lot located on the west side of Sycamore Terrace, just to the north of the intersection of Sycamore Road and Sycamore Creek Way. Figure 1 shows the project site and the four-lot PUD plan area.

Figure 1: Project Site and Surrounding Area



The project site is surrounded by developed residential properties. Access to the site is from Sycamore Terrace, a private street connecting to Sycamore Creek Way. The site is pre-graded with a flat pad area. From the pad, the site slopes down to the west and south property lines and up to the north property line. The centerline of Sycamore Creek is on the adjacent parcel to the south. The creek on the project site is located on the south and west sides of the pre-graded building pad.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant requests Design Review approval to construct an approximately 4,800-square-foot, two-story custom home. The proposed home also includes an approximately 767-square-foot attached garage, patios/terrace on the side and rear elevations and balcony on the northwest (rear) elevation. Table 1 summarizes the prescribed development standards for new construction in the Design Guidelines and provides a comparison of the subject proposal to those standards.

Table 1: Development Standards

<i>Development Standard</i>	<i>Required</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
<i>Min. Setbacks</i>		
<i>Front</i>	25 feet	25 feet
<i>One side/Both sides</i>	15 feet/30 feet	15 feet/55 feet
<i>Rear</i>	25 feet	40 feet
<i>Max. Floor Area Ratio and House Size</i>	30% of 18,285 square feet, not to exceed 5,000 square feet. ¹	27% and 4,967 square feet
<i>Max. Height Main House</i>	27 feet for a two-story house, measured from grade to the highest ridgeline, or 407 feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD), whichever is less.	26 ft. 5 ¾ in from grade to the highest ridgeline, which equals 406.98 feet NGVD.

¹ Up to 600 square feet of garage floor area is exempt from the floor area ratio and house size.

The PUD also requires: (1) 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; and (2) the front yard setback to be measured from the easement line behind the rolled curb and gutter on Sycamore Terrace. The proposed setbacks meet these requirements.

The proposed custom home is designed in a neo-Spanish architectural style. The Design Guidelines call for homes be designed in a traditional style compatible with other homes in the immediate neighborhood; entrances should be modest in scale; exterior entry architectural features should not be taller than one story; and the use of stone and treated wood for exterior surfaces is encouraged. The proposed residence features modest detailing, a dark-brown concrete tile roof, medium-brown-colored stucco, a portico with stucco columns highlighting front entrance, and balconies/terraces. Please see Figure 2 for the proposed front elevation.

Figure 2: Front Elevation



The proposed landscape plan includes native and non-native species that are primarily drought tolerant, as well as some hardscape features, including a decorative earthtone-colored interlocking paver driveway and tile entry stoop, and concrete walkway along the side of the proposed residence.

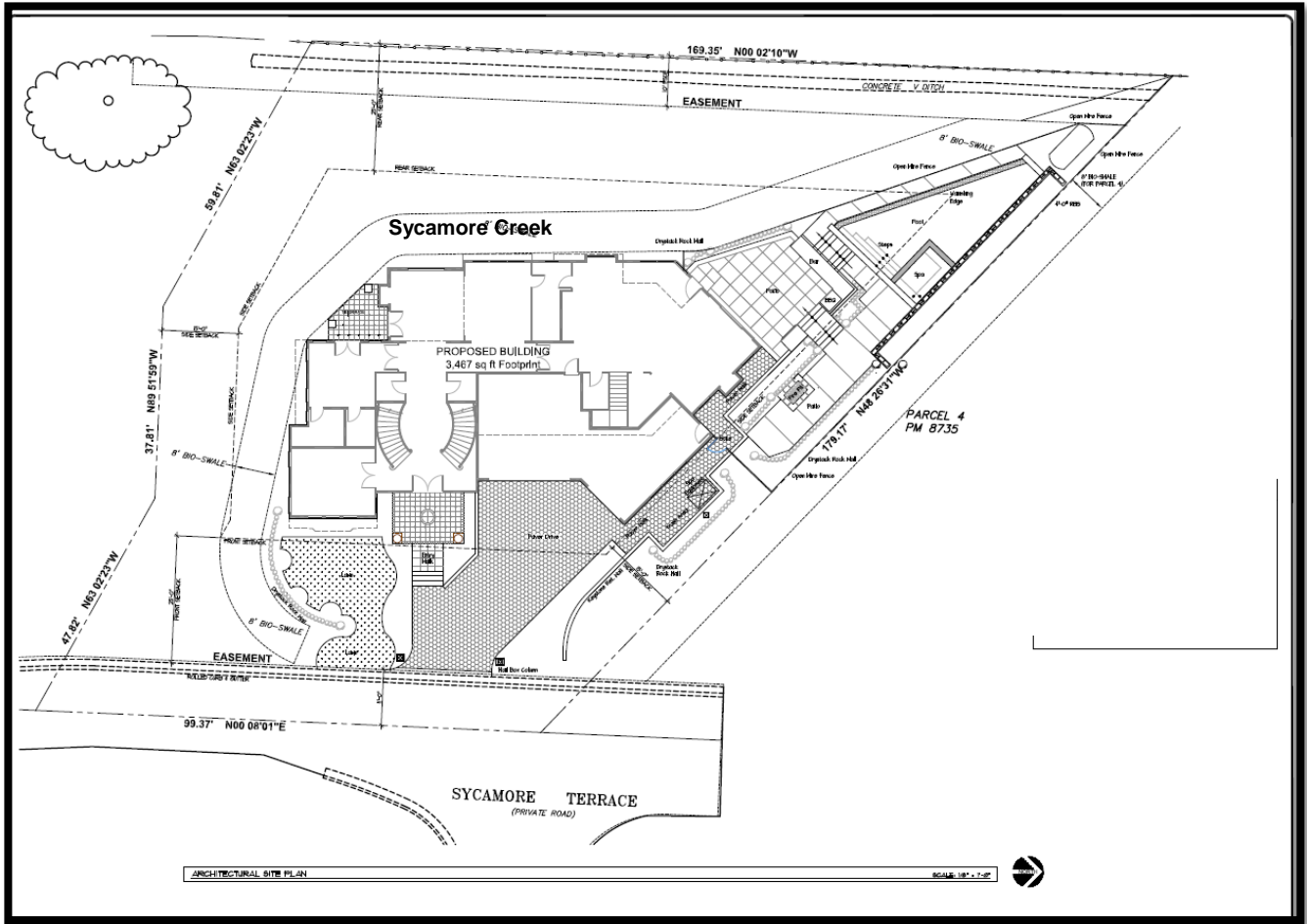
ANALYSIS

The NSSP establishes general design criteria for building setbacks, building height, privacy, etc. The PUD’s Design Guidelines address building height, maximum floor area ratio and house size, landscaping, architectural style, and other design parameters. Below is an analysis of the subject proposal in comparison with the Design Guidelines.

Site Design

The site was pre-graded when the subdivision improvements were installed, creating a narrow building pad area with slope banks sloping downward to the west and south and upward to the north. Grading is proposed to provide driveway access from Sycamore Terrace and for the pool and spa located to the northwest of the proposed home. The proposed home meets the required setbacks including the required setback from Sycamore Creek. Please see Figure 3 for the proposed site plan.

Figure 3: Site Plan



Proposed Design

The proposed building design implements the development’s Design Guidelines as summarized below:

- The proposed design complements the designs of the existing and recently approved homes on Sycamore Terrace.
- A 4:12 roof pitch is used.
- The proposed roof and building wall colors emphasize dark warm tones, minimizing reflectivity.

The proposed home is a two-story structure with articulated wall lines and variable roof lines that reduce the perceived massing of the home and promote visual interest. Ridgelines and façades are articulated and varied. As proposed, the building height would be 26 ft. 5¾ in from grade to the highest ridgeline, or 406.98 feet NGVD, meeting the height limit.

Exterior walls of the house would consist of smooth-troweled stucco finish, pre-cast concrete and foam trim at the windows, horizontal trim/band between first and second floors, and wrought-iron railing at the balconies. Additional architectural elements include a horizontal trim band on the second floor wall, a decorative front door 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.

Staff believes the proposed foam trim is not a suitable material. Staff recommends that stucco-coated foam trim be used instead. The proposed windows have divided lights. The applicant inadvertently left out the railing for the master bedroom balcony from the rear elevation. A condition has been added to address this item.

A PUD condition (#4) and Design Guidelines require view studies to be provided at the design review stage for the homes to demonstrate the proposed design, view impacts, privacy impacts, etc. Various techniques including setbacks, window placement, etc. should be employed in the building design to minimize view disruption and to maximize privacy. To show potential impacts, story poles (see Figure 4) have been erected to illustrate the location and height of the proposed building.

Figure 4: Story Poles Showing the Location of the Proposed Residence



The building is designed to fit in a pre-graded building pad and is located 40 feet from the rear property line. The master balcony on the second floor steps back from the rear building wall and is oriented towards the southwest to minimize privacy impacts to the neighbors located to the west. Staff contacted the Greenes in December 2016 to seek their comments regarding the proposed design. The Greenes declined to comment.

The previous approval required planting of evergreen trees on the slope bank facing the west and south side of the property to screen the visibility of the home from Greene's. Staff has included a condition requiring evergreen trees be planted in the slope areas.

Landscaping

The Design Guidelines do not prescribe a specific number of new trees to be planted per lot, but require new trees to be a minimum 15-gallon size with at least 50 percent of trees being a minimum of 24-inch box-size. Additionally, the Design Guidelines indicate that all hardscape elements should be carefully planned in conjunction with the site and landscaping to integrate aesthetically with the architectural style and landscape design. Materials such as stone, brick, exposed aggregate, stamped and/or colored concrete, and/or interlocking pavers are encouraged for driveway and hardscape. The proposed landscape plan includes a variety of

planting materials. The tree/plant palette shows eight new trees, both evergreen and deciduous, either 15-gallon or 24-inch box-size, will be planted.

Staff believes the proposed landscape plan would provide adequate landscaping for the site, as required by the Design Guidelines. The proposed landscape plan is composed of native and non-native species which are mostly drought tolerant. Turf area would be minimized, which would reduce water usage for landscaping. In addition, the inclusion into the project of pervious paving would reduce storm water runoff.

The proposed plant list includes Italian Cypress. Staff recommends that this species be replaced by other evergreen trees that are more appropriate and suitable for the area. Staff has included a condition requiring the final landscape plan to be submitted for review and approval prior to issuance of a building permit.

ALTERNATIVES

The subject parcel is a legally created lot zoned for residential uses. The proposed home would meet the intent of the underlying zoning designation and prior PUD development plan approval for the subdivision. Other alternatives include:

1. A one-story residence;
2. A two-story residence with a smaller second floor portion that includes a dormer elements that typically minimize massing and bulk; and
3. No project, under which the site would not be developed in the near-term.

Alternatives 1 and 2 could result in a residence with less bulk or mass, although the PUD approval permits a two-story residence on this lot with a height limit of 27 feet. However, the applicant declined to pursue these alternatives. In addition, the proposed residence is similar in size and bulk/massing to the previously-approved design and its design conforms to the Design Guidelines. While Alternative 3 may be desirable from a visual perspective, the site is likely to be developed in the future because both the NSSP and PUD-42 allow for development on the site. Therefore, staff believes the proposed project represents a reasonable development scenario for the site.

PROS/CONS

PROS	CONS
One additional unit would increase the City's supply of market-rate housing.	Adds a structure to a vacant lot that may visually impact the adjoining neighbor to the west until the proposed landscaping matures and functions as a screen/buffer.
Would allow for appropriate development on property zoned for residential use.	Creates higher demand on City services, including water, sewer, and roadway infrastructure, and other public services and amenities.
The project would further implementation of the North Sycamore Specific Plan, PUD-42, and its Design Guidelines	The proposed house is relatively large, although within the allowed development standards in the Design Guidelines
Additional landscaping along the western and southern slope bank would reduce visual impacts of the proposed structure from neighbors.	

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposal is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15303(a) and (e), New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, and Section 15332, In-Fill Development Projects. Therefore, no new environmental document accompanies this staff report.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notices of this application were sent to surrounding property owners and tenants within a 1,000-foot radius of the site. At the time this report was published, staff had not received public comments regarding the project.

CONCLUSION

Staff has reviewed the subject proposal in accordance with the NSSP, approved PUD-42, and the Design Guidelines and believes the subject proposal is consistent with the regulations and Design Guidelines. Staff believes that, with the proposed conditions, the architectural style and design of the home are appropriate for the North Sycamore Specific Plan Area and the surrounding neighborhood. Staff recommends the Planning Commission approve design review Case P16-0916 subject to Conditions of Approval in Exhibit A.

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