

Planning Commission Staff Report

August 10, 2016
Item 5.a.

SUBJECT: P16-0920

**APPLICANT/
PROPERTY OWNER:** Kuldeep Singh

PURPOSE: Application for Design Review approval to construct an approximately 6,031-square-foot, two-story single-family residence with an approximately 699-square-foot attached garage and an approximately 2,703-square-foot basement

LOCATION: 2 Winding Oaks Drive (Lot 2)

GENERAL PLAN: Low Density Residential and Open Space-Public Health and Safety

SPECIFIC PLAN: Vineyard Avenue Corridor

ZONING: Planned Unit Development – Hillside Residential/Open Space (PUD-HR/OS) District

EXHIBITS:

- A. [Draft Conditions of Approval, dated July 27, 2016](#)
- B. [Project plans, view simulations, and color and material board dated "Received July 7, 2016"](#)
- C. [Location and Notification Map](#)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Design Review application P16-0920 based on the documentation in this report and the previous findings made for the Vineyard Avenue Corridor Specific Plan, Planned Unit Development (PUD)-54, the Estates on Oak Ridge Architectural Design Guidelines (Guidelines), and 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 6,031-square-foot, two-story custom home on Lot 2 of the Estates on Oak Ridge 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/HISTORY

The property is within the Vineyard Avenue Corridor Specific Plan area consisting of seven residential lots for custom homes and one lot for a City water tank (approved in 2006; PUD-54). Currently, Lot 1 is under construction and Design Review applications for Lots 3 and 7 were

recently approved; all other lots remain undeveloped (see Figure 1). The Guidelines specify the development standards for each lot within the Subdivision, including, but not limited to, the designated development area (DDA) or buildable area (shown on Figure 2), building size, building height, maximum square footage, maximum floor area ratio, landscaping, and architectural styles.

In addition to the specified development standards, all homes within the Estates on Oak Ridge Subdivision (Subdivision) are encouraged to conform stylistically to one of six architectural styles: Craftsman/Bay Area Traditional, Mediterranean, Monterey/Spanish Eclectic, French Country, Tuscan Farmhouse, and Tudor/English Country. Each of these styles is intended to provide visual interest and diversity within the Subdivision, but to also ensure a cohesive neighborhood design.

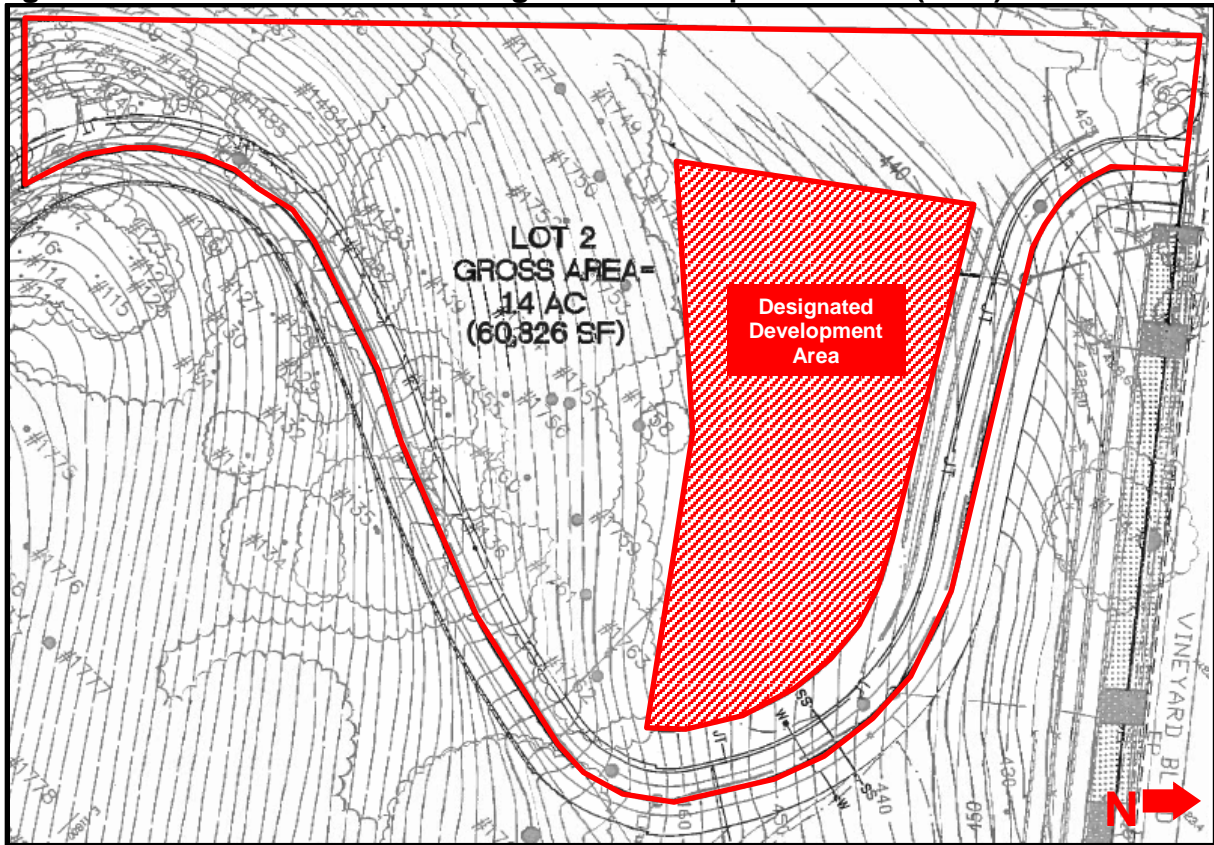
SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject site is Lot 2 within the Subdivision. It is located on the south and west sides of Winding Oaks Drive and, along with Lot 1, is the northernmost lot within the Subdivision, just south of the Subdivision entrance. The vacant lot is approximately 1.40 acres in size and is irregularly-shaped. With the exception of the fairly flat DDA, the site is steeply sloped, with the terrain steeply rising north to south of the DDA and sloping down from the north side of the DDA to Winding Oaks Drive, which abuts the lot on its north and east sides. Approximately 30 large and established oak trees are located south of the DDA. Approximately 20 new and smaller oak trees that were planted on this lot as mitigation as part of the PUD-54 approval are primarily located along the western edge of the DDA and/or along Winding Oaks Drive, at the northern and eastern edges of the DDA. Residential and/or open space areas generally surround the subject lot in all directions. Figure 1 shows an aerial photograph of the subject lot, and Figure 2 shows the subject lot's plot plan, along with the DDA.

Figure 1: Aerial Photograph



Figure 2: Lot 2 Plot Plan and Designated Development Area (DDA)



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant requests Design Review approval to construct an approximately 6,031-square-foot, two-story custom home. The proposed home also includes an approximately 699-square-foot garage, a 2,703-square-foot basement, and 653 square feet of partially enclosed covered porches, patios and/or balconies at the front and west sides (see Site Plan in Figure 3 below). Table 1 below summarizes the prescribed development standards for new construction in the Oak Ridge Architectural Design Guidelines and provides a comparison of the subject proposal to those standards:

Table 1: Development Standards

Development Standard	Required	Proposed
<i>Min. Setbacks</i>	No development outside of DDA	All development within DDA
<i>Max. Floor Area Ratio*</i>	42%	42%
<i>Max. House Size**</i>	6,040 square feet	6,031 square feet****
<i>Max. Height Main House***</i>	30 feet	27 feet, 7 inches
<i>Max. Driveway Width</i>	16 feet	16 feet
<i>Min. Garage Size/On-site Parking</i>	3 car + 2 on-site guest spaces	3 car + 2 on-site guest spaces
<i>Min. Tree Planting</i>	14 new 24-inch box trees	19 new 24-inch box trees

* The Estates on Oak Ridge Subdivision FAR is calculated by dividing the total conditioned space of each home (including garage area exceeding 700 sq. ft., but excluding basements that are entirely below grade on all sides, non-habitable accessory structures, exterior balconies, stoops and steps, decks, and porches not enclosed on three sides) by the DDA.

** House size determined by size of the DDA multiplied by the floor area ratio (FAR).

***The height of a structure is measured vertically from the lowest finished grade adjacent to an exterior wall of a building to the highest elevation of the building, excluding chimneys and similar roof features, as permitted by R-1-40,000 District.

****House size includes total house floor area plus any garage floor area exceeding 700 square feet.

The proposed 6,031-square-foot custom home (comprising 8,734 square feet of habitable space, including the basement) is designed in a Mediterranean architectural style. Consistent with the Guidelines, the Mediterranean style features architecture that is “U” or “L” shaped in plan view, with balanced proportions and restrained detailing, barrel tile roofs, smooth stucco, recessed doors and windows inset into thickened walls, cast concrete or tile surrounds highlighting major openings, and arched doorways, columns, etc. The colors are usually warm-toned earth colors. In this case, the proposed residence is designed in a U-shape (see Figure 3), and features modest detailing, a barrel tile roof, smooth stucco finish, recessed doors, an arched opening above the front door and columns on the north and east sides. The main body color is a medium tan or beige, and the trim is an off-white color.

The proposed landscape plan includes native and non-native species that are primarily drought tolerant, as well as some hardscape features highlighted by a decorative earthtone-colored paving-stone driveway and entry walkway, as well as earthtone-colored concrete step treads along the southern and western sides of the proposed residence. As discussed, there are several mature oak trees immediately adjacent to the DDA on the subject parcel, as well as approximately 20 younger oaks planted as mitigation trees related to the PUD-54 approval. No existing trees are proposed for relocation or removal, or will be adversely affected by the project.

Figure 3: Site Plan

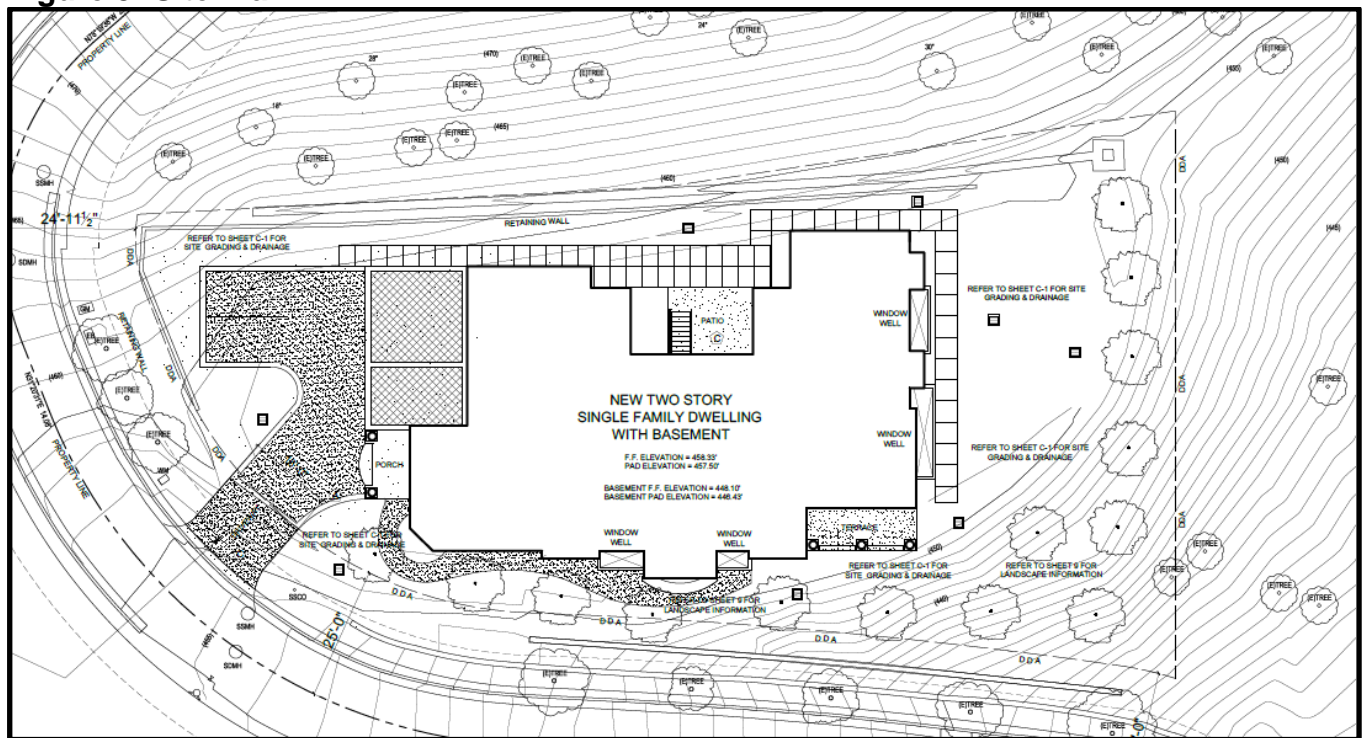


Photo simulations showing the pre- and post-construction conditions are provided in Exhibit B as required by PUD-54. Initially, the proposed home would be highly visible from the photo simulation locations (Thiessen Street at Vineyard Heights Lane and Vineyard Avenue at Manoir Lane); however, as existing and proposed landscaping matures as shown in the visual simulations (see Figures 6, 7 and 8) prepared for the five and ten year conditions, the residence would be screened from view.

Please see the attached project plans (Exhibit B) for additional information on the subject proposal. A color and material board will be available for review at the July 27, 2016 hearing.

STAFF REVIEW/ANALYSIS

The architectural design guidelines that were established by PUD-54 (Estates on Oak Ridge) address the DDA/building envelope, building size, building height, maximum square footage, maximum floor area ratio, landscaping, architectural style, and other design parameters. Below is an analysis of the subject proposal in comparison with those architectural design guidelines (see also Table 1 above). Please see the project plans and view simulations in Exhibit B, and color and material board available at the hearing for additional information on the design characteristics of the subject proposal.

Site Design

The Guidelines prescribe a DDA that establishes a defined building envelope that limits development on the subject lot to that area only. As such, there are no specific setback requirements for the Subdivision.

The proposed home is sited completely within the DDA area, as required. The DDA is fairly flat in relation to the other portions of the subject lot, which reduces the amount of grading necessary to accommodate the footprint of the home. By orienting the driveway approach within a flat portion of the site, minimal grading would be necessary to provide access from Winding Oaks Drive.

Architectural Design

The Guidelines indicate buildings should be designed to minimize visual height and bulk. Building height, bulk, and floor area should respond to the lot size, natural site terrain, and other site conditions. Wall recesses and projections, roof overhangs, decks, porches, bay windows, dormer windows, and other architectural features are encouraged to reduce visual bulk and create interest. Buildings should be designed for consistency in massing, proportions, details, materials, and colors on all exterior walls. Roof forms should generally include traditional styles such as hips and/or gables. Brick, stucco, stone or wood is encouraged for exterior walls, while slate, concrete or clay (barrel or flat) are encouraged for roofing materials. All colors should be earthtones.

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. Additionally, the proposed basement is entirely below grade, which allows the home increased living space, without increasing the building height or massing visible from the surrounding areas. The entire residence incorporates a smooth stucco finish and a low-pitched blended terra cotta colored barrel tile roofing, consistent with the intended architectural style. The main body color is a medium tan or beige, consistent with the recommended earthtone color range for the subdivision.

As proposed, the exterior walls of the house will be articulated and the detailing of the building will be compatible with others in the neighborhood. The use of smooth stucco, wall articulation and detailing will create an attractive home for the neighborhood. The recessed and arched covered front and side entry doors, column lined veranda, and wrought iron lined balconies add architectural interest and the home design incorporates high quality materials and elements. The front entry and garage doors are sufficiently detailed and are compatible with the design of

the proposed home. The architectural design and finish materials/colors are generally consistent in their interpretation of the required Mediterranean architectural style. However, to further lessen the visual impact of the home, staff is recommending a condition of approval requiring the applicant to modify the roof tile color blend to include some brown tones, ensuring consistency with the architectural design guidelines. Figures 4 and 5 below show the proposed front and rear elevations, respectively (See Exhibit B for side elevations).

Figures 4 and 5: Proposed Front and Rear Elevations



Landscaping

The Guidelines prescribe a specific number of new 24-inch box trees to be planted per lot. Additionally, the architectural design guidelines indicate 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.

The proposed landscape plan includes a variety of planting materials. The plan includes a tree/plant palette of native and non-native species that are mostly drought tolerant, as well as hardscape features, including a decorative earthtone colored paving-stone driveway and entry walkway, as well as earthtone colored concrete step treads along the southern and western sides of the proposed residence designed to complement the proposed home and architectural style.

The architectural design guidelines require a minimum of 14 new 24-inch box size trees on the subject lot. The proposed landscape plan includes a total of 19 new trees throughout the site, all 24-inch box size. No trees are proposed for relocation, removal or will be affected by the project.

Staff believes the proposed landscape plan will provide adequate landscaping for the site, as required by the architectural design guidelines. Moreover, as requested by staff, the applicant revised the initial landscape plan to include a more substantial landscape buffer, including additional trees and shrubs, along the Winding Oaks Drive frontage, which faces Old Vineyard Avenue, as required by the architectural design guidelines. This landscape buffer will further reduce the visual impact of the home and the existing retaining walls along Winding Oaks Drive from the street level. Additionally, the combination of plant materials and hardscape will add interest to the site and will enhance and soften the appearance of the site from the surrounding parcels and Vineyard Avenue as it matures. Figures 6, 7 and 8 on the next page show the landscape maturity progression at zero, five and 10 year intervals, respectively. The projected tree growth has been reviewed by the City's Landscape Architect and appears realistic.

Fencing and Walls

The architectural design guidelines indicate that fences and walls should be considered an extension of the architecture of the residence and should be designed to be compatible with the natural landscape. Open wire and wrought iron fencing may be allowed within the DDA. Solid fencing is only permissible to screen equipment and garbage areas and is prohibited on property lines. Exposed retaining walls greater than five feet are not permitted and need to be plastered and colored to match the residence or be stone-faced.

No fencing is proposed for the project. However, a new retaining wall that ranges from one to three feet in height is proposed at the rear of the residence and along a portion of the eastern edge of the driveway, adjacent to the guest parking spaces. A condition of approval has been recommended requiring the retaining wall to be plastered and colored to match the residence or be stone-faced to complement the residence/hardscape, as required by the architectural design guidelines. All other retaining walls shown on the project plans, including those along Winding Oaks Drive that are currently visible from Old Vineyard Avenue, were approved with the Subdivision and have already been constructed. No changes are proposed for any existing retaining walls.

Lighting

The architectural design guidelines specify that all exterior lighting be designed, installed and controlled to minimize lighting on the hillsides and prevent lights from pointing directly at up-hill or adjacent properties. Building up-lighting and/or wash lighting on the building is prohibited, excluding low-level lighting for pathways and entryways. In addition, wall-mounted lighting on the proposed home should be complementary to the architectural style and consistent with the architectural design guidelines.

No landscape lighting is proposed for the project. Staff is recommending a condition of approval requiring the applicant to submit design details and locations of all wall-mounted lighting on the proposed residence. The condition requires that all wall-mounted lighting comply with the guidelines.

Figures 6, 7 and 8: Landscape Maturity Progression (zero, five and 10 years)



ALTERNATIVES

The subject parcel is a legally created lot zoned for residential uses. The proposed home would be the preferred land use to meet the intent of the underlying zoning and prior PUD development plan approval for the Subdivision. Staff believes the other alternatives include:

1. A one-story residence designed in this or one of the other five approved architectural styles for the Subdivision, such as Tuscan Farmhouse;
2. A two-story residence designed in one of the other five approved architectural styles that include traditional architectural elements that typically minimize massing and bulk, such as Craftsman or Tuscan Farmhouse; and
3. No project, under which the site would not be developed in the near-term.

While Alternatives 1 and 2 could potentially result in a residence with less bulk or mass, Lot 2 is identified as one of two lots within the Subdivision where two-story residences are permitted by right. Moreover, the proposed residence is designed in one of the six approved architectural styles for the Subdivision, conforms to the Guidelines, and the second floor is stepped back and articulated to reduce the perception of mass. While Alternative 3 would be desirable from a visual perspective, it would not be feasible in the longer-term because both the Vineyard Avenue Corridor Specific Plan and PUD-54 anticipate 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 relatively large structure to a vacant lot that is currently highly visible and will be visible for an extended period of time until the proposed landscaping matures
Would allow for appropriate development on property zoned for residential use	Creates higher demand on City services, including water, sewer, and roadway infrastructure, and would increase demand for schools and other public services and amenities
Consistent with Vineyard Avenue Corridor Specific Plan, PUD-54, and Guidelines	No second unit included in project design
Minimal grading required as all development is within the generally flat DDA	The proposed house is relatively large, although within the allowed development standards in the Guidelines
Significant and enhanced landscaping along project frontage would soften appearance and reduce visual impacts on a lot located on an elevated plateau that is already highly visible from the surrounding area	

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

Notices of this application were sent to surrounding property owners and tenants within a 1,000-foot radius of the site. Staff has provided the location and notification map as Exhibit C for reference. At the time this report was published, staff had not received any public comments about the project.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This project was programmatically reviewed as part of the Vineyard Avenue Corridor Specific Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which was certified on June 1, 1999. Pursuant to Section 15182 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, no additional environmental review is required for residential projects that are proposed in accordance with a

Specific Plan for which CEQA documentation was certified after January 1, 1980. Therefore, no additional CEQA review or discussion accompanies this report.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

Staff has reviewed the subject proposal in accordance with the Vineyard Avenue Corridor Specific Plan, approved PUD-54, and the Guidelines and believes the subject proposal is consistent with the regulations and Guidelines. Staff believes that the architectural style and design of the home are appropriate for the Vineyard Avenue Specific Plan Area.

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