



Scenic Pacifica
Incorporated Nov. 22, 1957

PLANNING COMMISSION Staff Report

DATE: April 2, 2018

FILE: SP-167-17

ITEM: 1

PUBLIC NOTICE: Notice of Public Hearing was published in the Pacifica Tribune on March 21st, 2018, and mailed to 324 surrounding property owners and occupants.

APPLICANT: Javier Chavarria
848 Burns Ct.
Pacifica, CA 94044

OWNER Chris Vera
211 Beachview Ave
Pacifica, CA 94044

PROJECT LOCATION: 211 Beachview Ave. (APN 009-493-090)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Rear addition of 1,131 square feet (sf), to an existing 1,207-sf two-story single-family residence on an existing 4,510-sf lot.

SITE DESIGNATIONS: General Plan: Low Density Residential (LDR)
Zoning: P-D (Planned Development)

RECOMMENDED CEQA STATUS: Class 1 and Class 3 categorical exemptions provided in Sections 15301 and 15303 of the CEQA Guidelines.

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED APPROVALS: None. Subject to appeal to the City Council.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approve as conditioned.

PREPARED BY: Robert Smith, Assistant Planner

PROJECT SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION, AND FINDINGS

ZONING STANDARDS CONFORMANCE:

<u>Major Standards</u>	<u>Required (R-1 standards unless noted)</u>	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Lot Coverage	40% max	18%	29%
Height	35'-0" max	22'-5"	No change
Landscaping	20% min	82%	63%
Setbacks			
-Front	15'-0" min (house) 20'-0" min (garage)	12'-9" (house) 15'-10" (garage)	No change No change
-Side	4'-1" (Sec. 9-4.2705(b))	4'-0" (north west) 10'-0" (south east)	No change No change
-Rear	20'-0" min (house)	60'-11"	46'-2"
Parking	Two garage spaces (18' W X 19' L min)	One garage space (11'-5" W X 19'-11" L)	No change

Table 1: Zoning Standards Conformance

PROJECT SUMMARY

1. General Plan, Zoning, and Surrounding Land Uses

The subject site's General Plan land use designation is Low Density Residential (LDR), which permits average residential development density of three to nine units per acre (average lot area of 4,840-14,520 sf per unit). The existing single-family residence on the project site was constructed in 1964, prior to adoption of the City's 1980 General Plan. Although the lot size of the site results in a development density in excess of the LDR standard, the proposed project would not alter the existing land use or density of the site.

The subject site's location is within the P-D (Planned Development) zoning district. The P-D zoning district requires approval of a Specific Plan prior to issuance of a building permit for construction. It also requires a Specific Plan to be consistent with an approved Development Plan, which sets forth permitted uses within a P-D-zoned area. In cases such as the subject project where a Development Plan does not exist, Section 9-4.2213 of the Pacifica Municipal Code (PMC) applies alternative standards for considering a modification to an existing structure. Within the P-D zoning district, regulations for area, coverage, density, yards, parking, height, and open ground area shall be guided by the regulations of the residential, commercial, or industrial zoning district most similar in nature and function to the proposed project type. In this case, the regulations of the R-1 (Single-Family Residential) zoning district will apply. Zoning surrounding the project site is Planned Development (P-D) with land uses consisting entirely of single-family residences of mostly two stories on approximately 20 percent average slopes, with a parcel to the south comprising a later development of townhouses. To the south is an area of Hillside Preservation District overlay, and beyond the R-1 zoning district, with most areas substantially built-out.

2. Municipal Code

The project requires Planning Commission approval of the following entitlement prior to issuance of a building permit:

- Specific Plan: Required prior to issuance of a building permit for new construction within the P-D zoning district, or for increases of 50 percent or more in the floor area of a structure if the original specific plan is unavailable (PMC Sec. 9-4.2208).

The specific findings for approval of this permit are discussed in greater detail later in this staff report.

3. Project Description

A. Single-family Residence

The living area of the existing single-family residence totals 1,207 square feet (sf) comprised of 575 sf at first floor and 632 sf at second floor. Off-street parking is provided in a 247 sf attached garage accessed from Beachview Avenue. The overall footprint of the existing house is approximately 877 sf (18 percent lot coverage) with a floor area ratio (FAR) of 27 percent.

The addition of 1,131 sf living area is across two floors with no additional garage area, increasing lot coverage to 1,296 sf and 29 percent lot coverage (FAR increases to 52 percent). The existing 4'-0" left and 10'-0" right side setbacks would be maintained with the new addition. The existing left side setback is one inch less than required by Pacifica Municipal Code (PMC) Section 9-4.2705(b), however, PMC Section 9-4.3002(c)(2) allows expansions of nonconforming structures without a discretionary permit provided the expansion does not increase the degree of nonconformity. In this case, continuing the addition along the same building line would not reduce the existing setback, and therefore, would not increase the degree of nonconformity. Proposed lot coverage, at 29 percent, would be below the R-1 development standard of 40 percent maximum.

i. First Floor

The rearranged first floor level will create a new 'open plan' kitchen, family and living area, with services including bath, laundry and pantry along the northwest wall.

ii. Second Floor

The majority of new livable area will be added at the second floor level, comprising master bedroom with ensuite bathroom, and the conversion of one existing bedroom to a home office. The addition will extend the existing footprint 15 feet into the rear yard. The 711 sf upper floor will follow the existing building line.

The overall height of the house will not change beyond 22'-4", well below the 35 feet limit in the R-1 zone. When viewed from the front along Beachview Avenue, the house will effectively not exhibit any significant increase in bulk.

B. Decks

The project will include small decks, one at the front (37 sf - as existing) and rear (51 sf - as proposed). The garage-top deck will remain as-is. Decks will be connected with external doorways.

C. Architectural Styling

New asphalt shingle roofing and stucco siding will match color and character to the existing materials and surrounding buildings with the exception of a horizontal stone course around the building base. Combined with other façade treatments including window design, the project will result in an aesthetic improvement to the structure, with a condition to approve final color and material selection.

D. Landscaping

Proposed landscaping will improve site aesthetics with a new fifteen (15) gallon tree in the front yard. A condition of approval requires a detailed final landscaping plan of drought tolerant, coastal compatible, and native plants.

4. Required Findings

SPECIFIC PLAN

Specific Plan approval requires the Planning Commission to make the findings discussed below (PMC Section 9-4.2209). The following discussion supports the Commission's findings in this regard.

A. That the specific plan is consistent with the approved development plan

The PMC requires an approved development plan to contain a list of approved uses for an area with P-D zoning. The approved uses in a development plan are then implemented with approval of one or more specific plans which specify the site layout, architectural design, and other detailed parameters of individual projects proposed for construction.

San Mateo County Assessor records indicate the existing house was constructed in 1964, following the City's incorporation in 1957. Due to the age of the Fairmont subdivision (originating in the 1960's) where the structure is built, staff was unable to locate the original development plan for the neighborhood. Staff has inferred from the type and pattern of development observed throughout the neighborhood, which consists entirely of detached single-family residences, that a detached single-family residence of the proposed type is consistent with the approved development plan for the area. Therefore, staff recommends finding that the proposed specific plan is consistent with the approved development plan.

B. That the specific plan is consistent with the City's adopted Design Guidelines

The City has adopted Design Guidelines which are intended to accomplish the following purposes:

- Ensure at least a minimum standard of design through the application of consistent policies.
- Encourage new construction which exceeds minimum standards and discourage construction which falls short of those standards.
- Provide a framework for review and evaluation of design proposals.
- Implement applicable General Plan and Local Coastal Plan goals and policies.
- Expedite and facilitate the planning permit process.
- Provide direction for design and redesign of projects.

The Design Guidelines are advisory in nature and, unlike zoning, do not contain explicit standards for determining strict compliance. Rather, they address significant elements of project design that, when balanced overall, result in the best possible site layout and building architecture for a project. An applicant may propose a project which complies with some but not all guidelines and the Planning Commission may still find the project consistent with the Design Guidelines. It is up to the Commission's discretion to determine the appropriate balance and relative priority of the guidelines for a particular project when considering whether a project has achieved Design Guidelines consistency.

Staff's assessment of the project is that the proposed improvements at the site are consistent with the City's adopted Design Guidelines. Major areas of project consistency with the Design Guidelines include the following (Design Guidelines guidance followed by staff discussion):

SITE PLANNING

- Lighting. Exterior lighting should be subdued, and should enhance building design as well as provide for safety and security. Lighting which creates glare for occupants or neighbors should not be used. In general, large areas should be illuminated with a few low shielded fixtures. Tall fixtures which illuminate large areas should be avoided.*

Discussion

The applicant proposes 'dark sky' lighting adjacent to neighbors with a condition to approve the final lighting design in accordance with this finding.

BUILDING DESIGN

- Design. The style and design of new buildings should be in character with that of the surrounding neighborhood. This does not mean that new buildings should be identical to existing buildings on neighboring lots, but that new buildings should complement, enhance, and reinforce the positive characteristics of surrounding development. This can be accomplished by incorporating the dominant architectural features of an area into the design of new development. Such features may include bay windows, chimneys, balconies, porches, roof shapes, and other architectural details and materials.*

Additions to an existing structure should also retain and/or be consistent with the positive architectural features of the original structure.

Discussion

Approximately 30 percent of the existing properties on this side of the street have extended the original footprint of the residences. The conventional residential design pattern is not disturbed by these previous alterations, and a uniform architectural style including, materials, roof designs, is consistent between the neighborhood and proposed project.

- iii. *Scale. An important aspect of design compatibility is scale. Scale is the measure of the relationship of the relative overall size of one structure with one or more other structures. Scale is also used to refer to a group of buildings, a neighborhood, or an entire city. A development can be “out of scale” with its surroundings due to its relative height, bulk, mass, or density.*

A structure which is out of scale with its site and neighborhood threatens the integrity of the overall streetscape, and residential projects, particularly single-family dwellings, which are much larger than neighboring structures are therefore discouraged. The City’s height limitation is a maximum only, and the maximum height may often be inappropriate when considered in the context of surrounding development and topography. The “carrying capacity” of a given site is also an important factor in determining appropriate scale and lot coverage. As with the height limitation, the City’s lot coverage limitation is a maximum only.

Discussion

The proposed building is comparable with other homes which have created rear extensions at both first and second floors for additional living area on Beachview. The proposed project would be constructed at 22’-5” tall, well below the 35-foot height limit. It similarly would be well below the 40 percent maximum lot coverage, proposing to cover only 29 percent of the project site. Therefore, the proposed project, when compared to those residences situated in the vicinity of the subject site, is in scale with the neighborhood, and does not approach zoning maximum standards for height or lot coverage.

- iv. *Details. Use architectural features and details to help create a sense of human scale. Wall insets, balconies, window projections, etc., are examples of building elements which may help reduce the scale of larger buildings.*

Discussion

The proposed development includes sufficient architectural detail for cohesiveness, visual relief, and variety. The style of the project is modern with clean lines and surfaces, simple geometry, pitched roofs, railings and proportional windows. Architectural features are incorporated as recommended in the Design Guidelines. Exterior treatment of stucco, stone, and shingles combined with varied setbacks and heights help create visual interest.

- v. *Materials. Compatibility of materials is an essential ingredient in design quality. In areas with either historic or architecturally significant structures, the use of similar exterior construction materials should be used in new construction in order to maintain neighborhood character. Consistency and congruity of materials and design elements on individual structures is also important.*

Discussion

Primarily natural-colored stucco, with existing wood siding retained, and a new horizontal natural stone coarse at first floor maintains and enhances character. Second floor decks have railings composed of wood. The color and materials proposed integrate well and, combined with articulation of the existing elevations of the residence, create interest. The materials are consistent and appropriate.

- vi. *Color. Building color should be compatible with the neighborhood and should reinforce and complement the visual character of the building's environment. Multiple colors applied to a single building should relate to changes of material or form.*

Discussion

The proposed building integrates a mix of materials and colors. Changes in color correspond to changes in material. The colors and materials proposed complement existing design themes in several of the nearby residences.

- vii. *Privacy. Consideration should be given to the impact of development on the privacy of surrounding properties. Use judicious window placement and appropriate landscaping to help minimize the potential for loss of privacy.*

Discussion

The topography, lot shape, and building architecture of the proposed addition will result in a development which preserves the privacy of nearby residents. The project site does not face a neighboring property across Beachview Avenue.

Immediately to the left and right of the project site are existing single-family residences. There will be minimum impact to neighbors on either side of the project site. Rear properties along Crestmoor Circle are at least 20-30 feet above the highest point of the residence which will prevent any loss of privacy due to views from the project site.

- viii. *Consistency. There should be architectural consistency among all building elevations. All elevations need not be identical, but a sense of overall design continuity must occur. Window treatment and trim, for example, should be carried out around the entire building, not just on the most visible sides.*

Discussion

All sides of the proposed residence will be consistent in terms of color, material, and detailed treatments.

INFILL DEVELOPMENT

ix. Neighborhood Compatibility. *Established neighborhoods often have strong design characteristics.*

(a) Consideration should be given to the context of building design. Relate the height, bulk, style, material, and color of a structure to its surroundings. New development should complement the positive aspects of an existing neighborhood.

(b) Landscaping should also be chosen with consideration given to existing vegetation in the area. The use of plants which are similar to those of neighboring properties is encouraged.

(c) A design which has the potential to negatively impact a neighbor's view, sunlight, and/or privacy, should be avoided.

Discussion

Based on what common factors exist between the existing homes in the project area, in particular the siting of the residence, architectural style, materials, and colors, the project is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. The topography of the site and building design of adjacent residences will result in a project that will not negatively impact any neighbor's view, sunlight, or privacy.

5. CEQA Recommendation

15301. Existing Facilities

Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination. The types of "existing facilities" itemized below are not intended to be all inclusive of the types of projects which might fall within Class 1. The key consideration is whether the project involves negligible or no expansion of an existing use. Examples include but are not limited to:

- e) Additions to existing structures provided that the addition will not result in an increase of more than:
 - 10,000 square feet if:
 - The project is an area where all public services and facilities are available to all for maximum development permissible in the General Plan.
 - The area in which the project is located is not environmentally sensitive.

15303. New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures

Class 3 consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure. The numbers of structures described in this section are the maximum allowable on any legal parcel. Examples of this exemption include, but are not limited to:

- a) One single-family residence, or a second dwelling unit in a residential zone. In urbanized areas, up to three single-family residences may be constructed or converted under this exemption.

The subject proposal to construct a 1,131 square foot, to an existing 1,207 square foot two-story single-family residence on an existing 4,510 square foot lot fits within the scope of a Class 3 categorical exemption. The addition to the single-family residence would be less than 10,000 square feet and would occur in an area where water, sewer, electrical, telecommunications, police, and fire infrastructure and services are available to allow for maximum development in the General Plan; and, would occur in a substantially developed neighborhood on a site that is already developed and would not impact an environmentally sensitive area. The demolition of a garage and carport are specifically listed as covered structures under Section 15301(l)(4).

Furthermore, none of the exceptions to application of a categorical exemption found in Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines apply:

- Sec. 15300.2(a): There is no evidence in the record that the project would impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern in an area designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, State, or local agencies.
- Sec. 15300.2(b): There is no evidence in the record that cumulative projects of the same type would occur within the same place to create a significant cumulative impact.
- Sec. 15300.2(c): There is no evidence that the activity would have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.
- Sec. 15300.2(d) through (f): The project is not proposed near an officially designated scenic highway, does not involve a current or former hazardous waste site, and, does not affect any historical resources. Therefore, the provisions of subsections (d) through (f) are not applicable to this project.

Because the project is consistent with the requirements for a Class 1 and 3 exemptions and none of the exceptions to the exemptions in Section 15300.2 apply; therefore, there is substantial evidence in the record to support a finding that the project is categorically exempt from CEQA.

6. Staff Analysis

The project will remain consistent with similarly developed residences in the vicinity and the applicant has proposed a project that meets or exceeds all zoning standards. Given the circumstances, staff finds the applicant has proposed a project that has satisfied the Cities regulations and design imperatives.

7. Summary:

Staff has determined that, as conditioned, the project will satisfy all zoning regulations and applicable development standards, and will be consistent with the General Plan. The project will result in an addition to an existing single-family residence that is consistent with the approved development plan for the neighborhood and that, on balance, is consistent with the Design Guidelines. The proposed project incorporates what limited commonality exists among nearby residences on similarly situated lots into a cohesive project that achieves high-quality design. The project will be a positive addition to the neighborhood and will preserve the privacy of existing residences in the vicinity. Thus, staff recommends approval of the project subject to the conditions in Exhibit A of the Resolution.

COMMISSION ACTION

MOTION FOR APPROVAL:

Move that the Planning Commission find the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act; **APPROVE** Specific Plan SP-167-17 by adopting the attached resolution, including conditions of approval in Exhibit A; and, incorporate all maps and testimony into the record by reference.

ATTACHMENT LIST:

Attachment A - Land Use and Zoning Exhibit (DOCX)
Attachment B - Resolution and COAs (DOCX)
Attachment C - Project Plans (PDF)