



Legislation Text

File #: 22-864, Version: 1

Report regarding consideration of a Minor Use Permit and Design Review for a front, rear, and new 2nd-story addition to an existing single-family dwelling unit and the construction of a fence greater than four feet in height at 1200 Douglas Way in the Low Density Residential (RL-8) Zoning District in accordance with Title 20 of the South San Francisco Municipal Code, and determination that the project is exempt from CEQA.
(Stephanie Skangos, Associate Planner)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Zoning Administrator determine that the proposed project for an addition to an existing single-family dwelling unit at 1200 Douglas Way is categorically exempt under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Class 1, Section 15301, Existing Facilities, and approve a Minor Use Permit (MUP21-0004) and Design Review (DR21-0043) based on the attached Findings and subject to the attached Conditions of Approval.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

Site Overview

The project site is located at 1200 Douglas Way in the Low Density Residential (RL-8) Zoning District. The site is approximately 5,800 sq. ft. in size and is a corner lot with street frontage on Douglas Way and Holly Avenue. There is an existing 1,050 sq. ft. one-story single-family dwelling unit with an attached 453 sq. ft. two-car garage on the site. The existing garage is accessed from Douglas Way. The surrounding area is developed with single-family dwelling units.

Proposal

The applicant is proposing an addition to the existing single-family dwelling unit (1,050 sq. ft.) that includes a new second-story (748 sq. ft.) with roof decks on the first-story roofing and an extension of the existing first-story to the front and rear (646 sq. ft.). The proposal also includes an interior remodel of the first story, as well as additional site work, including new landscaping and fencing. The existing exterior will be refinished with materials and colors to match the new additions.

ZONING CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS

Proposed Use

The project site is located in the Low Density Residential (RL-8) Zoning District. Per South San Francisco Municipal Code (SSFMC) Section 20.080.002 (Land Use Regulations-Residential Districts), a detached single-family dwelling unit is permitted by-right and subject to SSFMC Section 20.080.003 (Development Standards-Residential Districts), which lays out the required development standards for a single-family dwelling unit in the RL-8 district.

As outlined in Table 1 below, the project complies with the required development standards for the RL-8 district with some exceptions. The front, street side, and rear yard setbacks for the existing single-family dwelling unit are legal non-conforming (or substandard), and the proposed expansion of the first floor continues some of the substandard setbacks. The entirety of the new second-story addition complies with all current setback requirements. Setbacks are further discussed in the section below.

Table 1. RL-8 Development Standards Compliance

Standard	Allowed	Proposed
Maximum FAR	0.5 or 2,000 sq. ft., whichever is greater	✓
Maximum Lot Coverage	50%	✓
Yards		
Front	15'-0"	✓*
Rear	20'-0"	✓**
Side – Interior	5'-0"	✓
Side – Street	10'-0"	✓**
Height	28'-0'	✓
Minimum Private Open Space	150 sq. ft.	✓
<i>*Existing setback is legal, non-conforming; new 2nd-story complies with required setback.</i> <i>**Existing setback is legal, non-conforming; 1st-story expansion follows existing setback as allowed under SSFMC Table 20.080.003(A); new 2nd-story complies with required setback.</i>		

Setbacks (Yards)

Pursuant to SSFMC Section 20.040.011 (Determining Lot Frontage), for a corner lot, the front of such lot is the narrowest dimension of the lot with street frontage. The project site has street frontage on Douglas Way and Holly Avenue. The street frontage with the narrowest dimension is Holly Avenue with a property line length of approximately 65 feet; the property line length along Douglas Way is approximately 74 feet. Therefore, pursuant to zoning regulations, Holly Avenue is considered the front of the project site.

However, SSFMC Section 20.040.011 allows for the widest dimension of the lot with street frontage to be considered the front of a lot subject to approval of a Minor Use Permit (MUP). The applicant is requesting, through the MUP process, that Douglas Way be considered the front of the project site. Due to the layout of the existing single-family dwelling unit, whose front is oriented towards Douglas Way, and the desired design aesthetic for the additions, staff supports this request.

As mentioned previously, the front, street side, and rear yard setbacks for the existing single-family dwelling unit are substandard and do not meet the current setback requirements with Douglas Way as the front and Holly Avenue as the street side for the project site. The proposed expansion of the existing first floor to the front and rear continue along the substandard street side and rear yard setbacks. Pursuant to SSFMC Section 20.080.003, the extension of a substandard side and/or rear yard setback is allowed along the ground level only and by no more than 50 percent of the existing wall length. The existing front wall is 19'-4" in length, and the new front addition is 19'-0" long; the existing rear wall is 26'-4" in length and the new rear addition is 17'-1" long, thus both comply with the requirements pertaining to extension of a substandard setback. Again, the entirety of the

new second-story will comply with the required setbacks.

Parking Requirements

Pursuant to SSFMC Section 20.330.002 (Onsite Parking and Loading - Applicability), a single-family dwelling unit less than 2,500 sq. ft. and with four or fewer bedrooms requires a total of two off-street parking spaces. The project increases the size of the existing single-family dwelling unit to 2,442 sq. ft. (not including the garage) and three bedrooms. There is an existing attached two-car garage on the site. Therefore, the two existing parking spaces are sufficient to accommodate the proposed addition, and additional parking is not required for this project.

Fencing

The proposed project also includes the installation of new landscaping and fencing along a portion of Douglas Way (front yard) and the entirety of Holly Avenue (street side yard). Pursuant to SSFMC Section 20.300.005 (Fences and Walls), fences and walls within the required front or street-facing side yard may be a maximum of three feet high. Visually transparent and non-opaque fences over three feet high may be allowed in required front and street-facing side yards, subject to approval of an MUP. A Zoning Code update approved by the City Council on October 26, 2022, which becomes effective on November 26, 2022, included an increase to a four-foot-high maximum for fences and walls within the required front or street-facing side yard.

The proposed fencing along Holly Avenue will be a combination of redwood fence posts atop a concrete retaining wall, with a maximum height of four feet, which complies with the updated fence height requirements. The proposed fencing towards the left side of Douglas Way will be redwood fence posts with a maximum height of six feet, requiring the approval of an MUP. This area of the project site has been designed to serve as usable private open space for the property, thus a higher fence is desired in this area. The top two feet of the Douglas Way fencing will consist of thinner fence posts with equal amount of open space between posts, resulting in a 50% transparency, allowing for the fence to qualify for an MUP.

While the proposed fencing is not consistent with the current zoning code, as mentioned, the new zoning regulations will take effect on November 26, 2022, which will be before the review, approval, and issuance of any building permits required for the project. Therefore, staff supports the use of the new fence height requirements, as well as the request for an MUP for increased height along Douglas Way since this area is the only viable option for usable open space, due to the layout of the existing single-family dwelling unit. Additionally, the portion of the fence that is more than four feet high includes 50% transparency, and the fence is located towards the left side of the front yard, away from the corner/intersection, decreasing any impacts or impairment to pedestrians and vehicles.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS

The proposed project is consistent with the City's General Plan, which designates the site as Low Density Residential (LDR). This land use designation is mainly intended for detached single-family dwellings with private outdoor open space.

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

The Design Review Board (DRB) reviewed the proposal on February 15, 2022 and requested some site planning and design revisions, including minor changes to help the modern design of the single-family dwelling unit better fit in with the surrounding neighborhood; reconsidering the clear glass element of the roof deck railings; and a redesign of the landscaping plan to incorporate low water tree species, taller green elements, and appropriate plantings related to the design, as well as the use of some additional materials to clarify the proposal, including more details on the proposed materials and colors and the transitions between material

changes; and a grading and drainage plan to indicate the locations of drains and down spouts.

The applicant submitted revised plans in response to the DRB comments, and the revised design was reviewed by the DRB on September 20, 2022. The DRB had a positive reception to the redesign and found the project to be a thoughtful and improved architectural addition to the existing single-family dwelling unit. The DRB supported the design and recommended approval to the Zoning Administrator with the following comment.

1. Consider planting the multi-trunk Olive trees at a minimum 48” box size to get the maximum height of the tree.

The above has been incorporated in the Draft Conditions of Approval found in Attachment 1 to this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed project has been determined to be categorically exempt under the provisions of CEQA, Class 1, Section 15301, Existing Facilities. The project site is an existing developed property surrounded by existing residential units. The proposal includes a new second-story and an expansion of the existing first story, resulting in an addition of less than 10,000 sq. ft. in an area where all public services and facilities are available to allow for maximum development permissible in the City’s General Plan and is not environmentally sensitive. Thus, the exemption under section 15301 applies.

CONCLUSION

The project, as conditioned, is compliant with the City’s General Plan, Municipal Code, Zoning Development Standards and Design Criteria. Therefore, staff recommends that the Zoning Administrator determine that the proposed addition to the existing single-family dwelling unit, including a new second-story with roof decks on the first-story roofing, an extension of the existing first-story to the front and rear, interior remodeling, and additional site work, including new landscaping and fencing, is categorically exempt under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Class 1, Section 15301, Existing Facilities, and approve the Minor Use Permit (MUP21-0004) and Design Review (DR21-0043) based on the attached Draft Findings and subject to the attached Draft Conditions of Approval.

Attachments:

1. Draft Findings and Conditions of Approval
2. Project Plans
3. DRB Comment Letter, dated October 5, 2022