

**TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO
PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

For the meeting February 4, 2013

Agenda Item D-2

Project Address:

122 Sycamore Avenue
San Anselmo, CA 94960
APN: 006-083-16

Case No.

DR-1302

Property Owner

Red Sycamore Homes
c/o Trenor Askew
360 Grand Avenue #347
Oakland, CA 94610

Request

Design Review to construct a new 3,246 square foot, two story residence with a 503 square foot attached garage and a 587 square foot rear deck at 122 Sycamore Avenue. The project site is located in the R-2 zoning district.

Recommendation

Conditional approval

I. PROJECT SUMMARY

Environmental Determination

Categorically Exempt: Section 15303(a) – New Construction or the Conversion of Small Structures. One single family residence or a second dwelling unit in a residential zone.

Authority

San Anselmo Municipal Code; Article 15 - Design Review.

Timing

A determination must be made within 60 days of the project being deemed complete which is March 26, 2013.

Previous Action

March 2012	Use Permit to demolish the existing single family home that was determined to be a public nuisance.
1984	Property rezoned from R-1 to R-2.

II. PROJECT ANALYSIS

Existing and Proposed Conditions

	Existing	Proposed	Code
Lot Size (sq. ft.)	10,948	Same	7,500
Floor Area (sq. ft.)	0	Total 3,246	3,831
		First Floor 1,842	
		Second Floor 1,404	
Garage(sq. ft.)	0	503	NA
Lot Coverage	0	29%	35%
Floor Area Ratio	0	30%	35%
On-Site Parking	0	Garage 2	2
Stories	0	2	2
Height above average existing grade (feet)	NA	30	30
Zoning	R-2	Same	NA
Flood Zone	A	Same	NA

Project Description

The applicant is proposing to construct a new 3,246 square foot, two story residence with a 503 square foot attached garage and a 587 square foot rear deck. The main floor of the proposed home will include a kitchen, living and dining rooms, a study/guest room, laundry room and a bathroom. The second level will include three bedrooms, two baths and a master suite. The house will be setback a minimum of 29 feet from the front property line, 8 feet from the side property lines and 85 feet from the rear property line. The maximum height of the house will be 30 feet.

The project requires approximately 77 cubic yards of material to be excavated and the same amount of material to be used as fill. No material is planned to be imported or exported and therefore a grading permit is not required.

The proposed exterior colors and materials include Monterey Taupe "Hardieshingle" siding, timber bark trim, white windows, stone veneer and black composition shingle roofing.

Five small trees are proposed for removal, two oaks and three walnut trees. Only the 30 inch diameter walnut tree adjacent to the back left corner of the house is a heritage tree. A heritage tree is defined in the San Anselmo Municipal Code as a tree with a trunk diameter of twenty-two inches or more. The applicant has provided an arborist's report which states that the tree is in poor health and should be removed and replaced (Attachment 2). The applicant will be required to obtain a tree permit prior to building permit approval for the new residence. The plan set includes a landscape plan which proposes 14 trees to be planted on the lot along with a variety of shrubs and various types of ground covers.

Shade Study

The project architect has provided a shade study (Sheet SH) to assist staff and the Planning Commission in making the design review finding that the project "Will not unreasonably impair access to light of neighboring structures." The study illustrates the shading at four different times during the year; winter, spring, summer and fall and at three different times during the day; morning, noon and late afternoon. These dates and times were chosen to provide the best overall assessment of the shading impact to the adjacent properties.

The study models the residence to demonstrate how shadows will fall on adjacent properties. The study shows that the adjacent properties to the west and east (126 Sycamore Avenue and 118 Sycamore Avenue) may be impacted by the proposed two story structure in the early morning and late afternoon hours during the winter and fall months.

Based on the study, the amount of shading created by the new residence is not unreasonable given that the neighboring houses will still have adequate sunlight throughout most of the year. Based on this information, staff is able to make the first design review finding with regard to impacts to natural light.

Design Review for New Residence Below 150 Mean Sea Level

The Town Zoning Ordinance states that a project below 150 mean sea level, with new second story construction that exceeds 400 square feet or an increase or decrease in the size of the residence by 50% or more, requires design review approval. The subject application meets all setback, height, lot coverage, floor area ratio and parking requirements.

III. REQUIRED FINDINGS

Design Review for New Residence

1. *The project will not unreasonably impair access to light and air of structures on neighboring properties.*

As described in the project analysis above and shown in the shade study provided, the new residence will not unreasonably impair access to light on neighboring properties,

nor will it impair access to air. Story poles were installed to allow the neighbors, public and Commissioners to visualize the new house. Because of the orientation of the lot (almost due south), the proposed home will cast almost no shadows onto neighboring properties. The upper level of the proposed home has been significantly stepped in on the front and rear in an effort to minimize the impact to adjacent properties.

2. *The project will not unreasonably affect the privacy of neighboring properties including not unreasonably affecting such privacy by the placement of windows, skylights and decks.*

The second story windows on the west elevation of the new home will be approximately 17 feet from the nearest neighbor to the west (126 Sycamore Avenue). There are three 2.5' by 2.5' bathroom windows and one 5' by 4' bedroom window on the upper level of the west elevation. The upper level of the proposed home has been significantly stepped in on the front and rear in an effort to minimize the size and impact of the upper level. Windows at the upper side elevations have been minimized to the fullest extent in an effort to preserve privacy for the neighboring properties. The west side bathroom windows shall have obscured glazing for privacy.

3. *The project will be of a bulk, mass and design that complements the existing character of the surrounding neighborhood.*

The project's bulk, mass and design are typical of newer homes in San Anselmo though not necessarily typical of all the homes in this particular older neighborhood. The neighborhood is comprised of small and large, one and two story homes on varying size lots and well as multifamily structures. The existing neighborhood consists of varying style of architecture including ranch, Spanish and Craftsman. The proposed new home is a two story Craftsman style home that complements the vernacular of the neighborhood. The upper level has been stepped in at the front and rear in an effort to reduce the mass and minimize the upper footprint. Overall staff is able to make the finding that the project is of a bulk, mass and design that complements the existing character of the surrounding neighborhood.

4. *The project will not materially affect adversely the health or safety of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the property of the applicant and will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in such neighborhood.*

Construction will be required to be in compliance with all adopted building codes, thereby ensuring the health and safety of persons in or near the property. The proposed project is consistent with the use of neighboring properties. It is a single family home that will fit into the neighborhood. The new home is replacing a dilapidated structure that used to exist on the property thus the project should actually improve the health and safety of the neighborhood.

IV. CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1. Planning Commission approval is based on the plans and materials titled Askew Residence 122 Sycamore Ave, prepared by Stewart K. Summers date stamped received by the San Anselmo Planning Department on November 20, 2012.
2. All conditions of approval shall be printed at the top of sheet 1 of the building permit drawings.
3. Plans submitted for building permit shall show the west side bathroom windows with obscured glazing for privacy.
4. An approved tree permit shall be obtained from the Town prior to issuance of a building permit for the new residence.
5. A building permit must be obtained prior to the start of any construction work that requires a permit per the Town of San Anselmo regulations. Please contact the San Anselmo Building Department at 415-258-4616 or townofsananselmo.org/building for requirements and further information.
6. If construction has not commenced within one year from the date of final action, the planning action becomes null and void. However, this discretionary action may be renewed by the Planning Director for a maximum period of one (1) year provided the applicant places such a request in writing to the Planning Director showing good cause prior to the expiration of the discretionary action.
7. The property owner shall indemnify and hold harmless the Town of San Anselmo and its officers and/or employees in the event of any legal action related to or arising from the granting of this approval and shall cooperate with the Town in the defense of any such action, and shall indemnify the Town for any award of damages and/or attorneys' fees and associated costs that may result.

Prepared By:

Phil Boyle
Senior Planner

Attachments:

1. Application and Supplemental Questionnaires
2. Arborist Report
3. Plans