



City of San Marino

Staff Report

Kevin Cheng, Chair
Shelley Boyle, Vice Chair
Howard Brody, Commissioner
John Dustin, Commissioner
Jeri Wright, Commissioner

TO: Chair and Members of the Planning Commission
FROM: Isidro Figueroa, Community Development Director
BY: Camillia Martinez, Associate Planner
DATE: October 24, 2023

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF APPEAL FOR DESIGN REVIEW CASE NO. 21-25 & 21-73 APPROVAL AT 1408 WILSON AVENUE FOR A FIRST AND SECOND STORY 418 SQUARE FOOT ADDITION. (SIGO GROUP MANAGEMENT, LLC)

STRATEGIC PLAN CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Beautiful, Preserved, Single-Family Neighborhoods
Well-Maintained Infrastructure

BACKGROUND

This project continued from the Planning Commission Meeting on January 25, 2023.

The project went before the Design Review Committee (DRC) on October 19, 2022. The DRC voted (4-1) to approve the project with one condition of approval:

- *The tree preservation plan must be strictly enforced with the supervision of the City's Urban Forester.*

The neighbors appealed the project on November 3, 2022. The appeal is based on the following points:

- We feel strongly that the City must protect our native oaks and the urban forest as per the promise to do so
- Staff incorrectly supported this project without consideration
- DRC Chair voted against the project in support of the community

- Neighbors should receive staff reports for review prior to meetings. This is a flaw in the City's process
- This is not a neighbor but a developer who is continuing the tradition, sadly, of turning our residential neighborhoods into commercial districts
- We hereby exercise our right to add additional arguments hereto

See attachment #9 for the appellants' request for appeal.

DISCUSSION

The project involves the construction of a 287 square-foot one-story addition and a 131 square-foot second-story addition to an existing 2,522 square-foot, two-story, single-family residence. The project is located on a 13,657 square-foot interior lot in the R-1 zone, Area District VII. The requires two design review actions pursuant to City Code Sections 23.15.03(A2)(A3).

- **DR 21-25**
 - An addition or alteration to an existing residential or commercial structure which: adds or expands a second story
- **DR 21-73**
 - An addition or alteration to an existing residential or commercial structure which: Extends the length of any side of the primary residential structure or commercial structure by the greater of twenty five percent (25%) or ten feet (10').

The proposed exterior modifications include the introduction of a new double-gable perpendicular to the existing gable roof of the home, a new shed dormer, and the replacement of wood-siding with natural wood shingle cladding in a Mist Gray color.

The project includes the following proposal **not subject** to design review:

- A rear yard covered patio
- The replacement of composition shingle roof with CertainTeed Landmark TL composition shingle roofing material in the Shenandoah color
- A 74 square-foot addition to the existing 525 square-foot 2-car garage for extra storage.

PROJECT HISTORY

November 17, 2021 – First public hearing before the DRC.

On November 17, 2021, the DRC reviewed and continued the proposed project to a date uncertain so the applicant could address comments made by the DRC. At the public hearing, the DRC requested the following changes (a

response as to how the applicant addressed the DRC comments is provided below the comments).

- **More appropriate front window placement**
 - The proposed double hung window at the top of the proposed new gable was relocated to be in the center of the gable.
- **Provide the parkway width on the plans**
 - The parkway is shown on the site plan as 12 feet.
- **Oak Tree concerns with the proposed construction**
 - The arborist report was updated on May 16, 2022, and the licensed arborist's conclusion and recommendations found that the listed tree protection measures be implemented to minimize the impacts of the proposed construction.
- **The proposed detached garage become an additional DRC action**
 - The project incorporates a DRC action, DR 22-43 for an accessory structure visible from public view which exceeds six hundred (600) square feet in total lot coverage
- **Consistent and accurate scope of work on the plans**
 - The project description has been updated to accurately reflect the scope of work
- **Scale and massing**
 - The applicant has decided not to reduce the square footage of the proposal as they feel the proposed addition is not increasing the height of the existing structure and not increasing the width of the existing structure. Additionally, with the proposed additions, the total livable area will be smaller than the adjacent neighbors existing residences.

September 7, 2022 – Second public hearing before the DRC.

On September 7, 2022, the DRC reviewed and continued the proposed project to a date uncertain so the applicant could address comments made by the DRC. At the public hearing, the DRC requested the following changes (a response as to how the applicant addressed the DRC comments is provided below the comments).

- **Concerns about the proposed size of the 3-car garage.**
 - The garage addition has been reduced to only add 74 square feet for storage.
- **The removal of the proposed awning design.**
 - The proposed awning has been removed and new wood trim around the door is being proposed.
- **Eliminate one or both windows next to the chimney.**

- The applicant has decided to keep both windows.
- **Provide a change in the window type and style of the front windows to simulate an elongated design.**
 - The windows have been changed from double-hung to casement to provide an elongated design.

The previous plans provided for the September 7th, DRC meeting included an expansion of the existing 525 square-foot, 2-car garage with a 126 square-foot addition for the structure to become a 3-car garage, which required a design review action (DRC 22-43) pursuant to City Code Sections 23.15.03(C). The applicant has decided to reduce the garage addition to under the 600-square-foot threshold; therefore, the garage addition has become an administrative review and not an additional design review action.

October 19, 2022 – Third public hearing before the DRC.

The project went before the Design Review Committee (DRC) on October 19, 2022. The DRC voted (4-1) to approve the project with one condition of approval:

- *The tree preservation plan must be strictly enforced with the supervision of the City's Urban Forester.*

Please refer to the Projects Historical Records if you would like to review the previous DRC staff reports and project plans for the following:

1. Approved DRC Plans (From 10-19-22 DRC Meeting)
2. Staff Report from the 11-17-21 DRC Meeting
3. Staff Report from the 9-7-22 DRC Meeting
4. Staff Report from the 10-19-22 DRC Meeting
5. Staff Report from the 1-25-23 PC Meeting

As previously mentioned in the background section, the neighbors appealed the project on November 3, 2022. Please see attachment #8 for the appellants' request for appeal.

On January 25, 2023, the Planning Commission (Commission) reviewed and continued the proposed project to a date uncertain. At the public hearing, the PC requested the following changes (a response as to how the applicant addressed the PC comments is provided below).

- **The project is not a Cape Cod style on the front façade. Cape Cod style needs to be more simplistic and not feature a double gable roof, as the current roof plan is too chaotic.**

- *The front roof design has been changed from a double gable to a single gable.*
- **Large shed dormers are found on Cape Cod styles. The proposed dormers should be broken up into 3 smaller dormers. There should not be a long stretch of windows in the dormers. You would typically see 3 separate shed dormers with the window frame being the exact size of the dormer shed. You would only have siding on the sides of the dormer, and there would be even spacing in between the dormers. Or you might see a single shed dormer as shown on the plans with windows evenly spaced across the shed.**
 - *As proposed, the applicant has decided to keep the single dormer to the front facade. The applicant did change the window to be evenly spaced and added wood singles to the sides.*
- **The other windows are odd shaped horizontal little windows that you would not see on a Cape Cod.**
 - *The applicant has decided to keep the horizontal windows next to the chimney because they add to the interior design element of a bookcase/curio cases located next to the chimney. The proposed shutters are removed to provide a more simplistic appearance.*
- **The exterior light fixtures are unsuitable for Cape Code and unshielded, creating a nuisance for the neighbors. The lights on the front façade serve no purpose and should be under the porch entry.**
 - *The exterior light fixtures have been removed from the plans.*
- **There is an inconsistency where the arborist report states no turf should be planted under the Oak tree, and the Landscape plan shows turf under the Oak Tree.**
 - *The landscape plan under page L-2.01A has been updated to show bark under the Oak Tree.*
- **The side-facing elevations have no articulation and have too much solid massing.**
 - *The proposal is to add 11 feet to the rear of the existing residence. The applicant believes adding 11 feet to the existing structure and adding a wood shingle façade does not create a massing problem.*

- **The wood shingle siding should be throughout the home and not only on the front elevation.**
 - *The applicant is now proposing to include wood shingles throughout the residence and detached garage.*
- **Story poles should be placed and that the rear yard can be available to be accessed.**
 - *Staff previously stated to PC that story poles were not installed on the property. The applicant brought to our attention that they had previously installed story poles for the first DRC meeting on November 17, 2021. The applicant provided photos, as shown in attachment #11, and indicated that the previous story poles were up for one year.*
 - *The applicant will arrange times for PC to visit the project site.*

TREE PRESERVATION

There are no trees proposed to be removed as part of the scope of work. The Arborist Report (ATTACHMENT 6) recommends protective fencing around trees 777, 778, 783, 784, 785, 786, and OS-1 (located off-site) prior to the start of construction to remain in place for the duration of the construction.

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION

The subject property is not identified on the Citywide Historic Resources Survey Report.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDING

The project is for the construction of an approximately 418 square-foot, first and second-story addition to an existing approximately 2,522 square-foot, single-family home. Pursuant to Section 21084 of the California Public Resource Code, the proposed project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Sections 15301 and 15303, Class 1 and Class 3, and there is no substantial evidence demonstrating that an exception to a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2 applies.

NEIGHBOR APPROVAL/OBJECTION LETTERS

Approve – 3

Object – 2

No response – 6

DESIGN REVIEW FINDINGS

Pursuant to Section 23.15.08, the San Marino City Code states that the DRC shall approve the application if it finds all of the following to be true:

1. That the proposed structure is compatible with the neighborhood.

The existing two-story residence closely resembles a Cape Cod style home. The legal neighborhood is composed primarily of two-story homes in a variety of architectural styles including Craftsman, Minimal Traditional, and Colonial Revival. The project proposes a 418 square-foot addition to the first and second-story of the home and exterior modifications. The exterior modification to the street-facing façade of the home includes the introduction of a new front-facing single gable, shutters, casement windows, and wood singles. The new front-facing gable will project approximately 4 feet from the existing façade and the shed dormer will be aligned with the windows found on the main body of the home. The proposed addition in the rear will create a new family room with 189 square feet of additional living area and a 319 square-foot covered patio area.

The additions and introduction of the front-facing gable will maintain the architectural style of the home and break up the bulk of the steep roof that is currently visible. The new front-facing gable will articulate the façade while maintaining the overall massing of the home and will therefore be compatible with the neighborhood.

The existing wood siding is proposed to be removed and replaced with wood shingle cladding. Natural wood shingle is a common wall-cladding material found on Cape Cod style homes. The legal neighborhood exhibits a variety of natural wall cladding materials including brick and wood-siding. The change from wood-siding to wood shingle will be compatible with the natural cladding materials found throughout the neighborhood.

As such, this project meets this finding.

2. That the proposed structure is designed and will be developed in a manner which balances the reasonable expectation of privacy of persons residing on contiguous properties with the reasonable expectations of the applicants to develop their property within the restrictions of this code.

Based on the project plans, the proposed addition in the rear will extend the footprint of the existing home by approximately 11 feet to the rear and will continue the same plate height of 8 feet 4 inches as the existing first floor. The adjacent property (1406 Wilson Ave.), nearest to the proposed first-floor addition is improved with a second-story home that extends approximately the same footprint as the proposed addition. There is an existing large oak tree canopy between both neighbors which provides an additional privacy buffer. Based on the adjacent building's configuration and the location of the existing oak tree canopy, the addition is not anticipated to impact any adjacent neighbors' privacy. The second-floor addition is only to the front of the house and will not produce an impact on privacy of any adjacent neighbors.

Therefore, this project meets this finding.

3. In the case of a building addition, the proposal is compatible with the existing building which includes the rooflines.

The proposed front-facing gable will break up the expansive roof and maintain the same 12:12 roof pitch found along the front façade while the new gable dormer and rear yard addition will match the 3.75:12 roof pitch found on the back of the home. The rear elevation currently features a large second-story massing that appears top heavy. The proposed rear yard addition will provide balance to the rear façade and will be compatible with the existing building.

Therefore, this project meets this finding.

4. That the colors and materials are consistent and match the existing building or structure.

The project includes the removal of existing wood siding and installation of natural wood shingle in a Mist Gray color. This material will be applied consistently throughout the façade of the home. The proposed addition in the rear will feature La Habra stucco cladding, CertainTeed Landmark TL composition shingle roofing material in the Shenandoah color, and Pella Lifestyle aluminum-clad windows in a white color; these materials will be consistent and match the materials found on the home.

Therefore, this project meets this finding.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission, (1) determine that based on the whole of the administrative record, that the proposed addition is exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15301, Class 1 & Class 3, and that there is no substantial evidence demonstrating an exception to the categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 applies; and (2) Find that the proposed project is compatible with the legal neighborhood and with the existing structure itself; and (3) Staff recommends approval of the project.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Revised Plans
2. DRC Neighborhood Map
3. Neighborhood Input Letters
4. Arborist Report (Updated 5-16-22)
5. Appeal Documentation
6. Applicant's Previous Story Pole Photos