SUBJECT: 2009-0874: Application for a project located at 1560 Grackle Way in an R-0 (Low Density Residential) Zoning District (APN: 309-33-009)

This item was continued from the February 8, 2010 hearing.

Motion Design Review to allow a 1,314 square foot addition to an existing 2,018 square foot home totaling 3,332 square feet with 54% Floor Area Ratio.

REPORT IN BRIEF

Existing Site Conditions Single-Family Residence

Surrounding Land Uses

North Single-Family Residence
South Single-Family Residence
East Single-Family Residence
West Single-Family Residence

Issues Neighborhood Compatibility

Environmental Status A Class 1 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from California Environmental Quality Act provisions and City Guidelines.

Staff Recommendation Approval with Conditions

Revised 2/18/2010
## PROJECT DATA TABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EXISTING</th>
<th>PROPOSED</th>
<th>REQUIRED/PERMITTED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Plan</strong></td>
<td>Residential Low Density</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>Residential Low Density</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zoning District</strong></td>
<td>R-O</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>R-O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lot Size (s.f.)</strong></td>
<td>6,192</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>6,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gross Floor Area (s.f.)</strong></td>
<td>2,018</td>
<td>3,332</td>
<td>2,786 w/o PC review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lot Coverage (%)</strong></td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>40% max.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Floor Area Ratio (FAR)</strong></td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>45% threshold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building Height (ft.)</strong></td>
<td>15’</td>
<td>24’</td>
<td>30’ max.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of Stories</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 max.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Setbacks

**First Floor:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Front</th>
<th>Right Side</th>
<th>Left Side</th>
<th>Combined Side</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20’</td>
<td>7’</td>
<td>8’</td>
<td>15’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Second Floor:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Front</th>
<th>Right Side</th>
<th>Left Side</th>
<th>Combined Side</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>7’</td>
<td>13’</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rear:**

|                      | 25’   | 25’        | 20’ min.  |

**Parking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Spaces</th>
<th>Covered Spaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 min.</td>
<td>2 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**BACKGROUND**

The item was reviewed by the Planning Commission at a public hearing on February 8, 2010 and continued to February 22, 2010 to allow time for the applicant to provide additional information regarding the location of the neighbor’s window, study the possibility of lowering the roof ridge height and clarifying the type of windows used on the sides of the second floor (see...
Attachment E). The proposed floor area and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) have been revised to exclude the vaulted ceiling area (over 15 feet) since the application was determined to be “complete” by December 17, 2009, prior to a new code standard on ceiling height related to FAR came into effect.

**ANALYSIS**

**Requested Additional Information**

At the February 8, 2010 meeting, the Planning Commission requested additional information, solar studies and clarification of the items noted below.

**Window location and shading** – The applicant has revised sheet A6 (AM Shadow Analysis) of the plans to reflect the location of the adjacent neighbors window. In addition, the applicant has included four additional studies, which provide additional information regarding: 1) the existing condition (A6.1), 2) what changes would be needed to move the widow out of a shadow (A6.2), 3) current shading resulting from existing trees (A6.3), and 4) the time the window will be shaded based on the current design (A7). This additional information has been attached (see Attachment D).

It is important to note that the proposed project does comply with the current requirements of Solar Access, as the proposed second floor does not shade more than 10 percent of the neighboring roof at 9:00 am or 3:00 pm at winter solstice.

The studies indicate that the window sill is partially shaded by the existing one story structure and the trees located on the subject property provide filtered light into the kitchen. The study provided on sheet A6.3 illustrates that in order to retain some direct sunlight into the window, the addition would need to be moved to south side of the structure and would still shade part of the window. The study provided on sheet A7 indicates that, based on the current design, the neighbor’s window will be shaded until 2:30 in the afternoon on winter solstice (the shortest day of the year). As days the length of the day and the angle of the sun increases, the amount of time and sunlight in the neighbors window will increase. The applicants architect has indicated that neighbors widow will out of the shade of the second floor February through October, due to the angle of the sun in the sky. The applicants architect will provide additional illustrations on February 28, 2010.

**Lowering the ridge height** – The applicant has not proposed lowering the height of the ridge since it would not result in a significant change in the shading of the window. As indicated on sheet A6.2, a second floor would need to be moved completely over to the south side of the home.
Privacy windows for the second floor - The applicant has indicated that windows located on the sides of the second floor will be opaque windows. A condition has been added requiring the building permit plans to clearly indicate that side second floor windows will be opaque or clearstory windows above eye level.

Environmental Review

A Class 1 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from California Environmental Quality Act provisions and City Guidelines. The proposed additions are exempt in that the proposed project will result in floor area of 3,332 square feet, is located in an area where existing public services are available and the area is not an environmentally sensitive area.

Design Review

Site Layout: The subject property is located near the corner of Grackle Way and Hebrides Way, immediately adjacent to 1564 Grackle Way, which was reviewed by the Planning Commission for a FAR of 52 percent on January 25, 2010. The proposed first floor additions are modest and will slightly extend the footprint of the structure at the front and rear of the structure.

Architecture: The existing home is a 1960 ranch style home which is adjacent to homes with a more contemporary architectural style and larger floor area ratios (FAR). The subject property lends itself to being in a transitional area, which allows for flexibility in the design and FAR. The proposed additions will accommodate additions to the ground floor and a new family room, new master suite and new bedroom. The resulting floor area for the structure will be 3,332 with an FAR of 54%.

As noted in the previous staff report for the February 8, 2010 hearing, staff included conditions requiring an additional 4 foot setback on the south (right) side of the second floor to minimize the two story wall and a change to the hipped gable for the second floor bedroom. Based on the information requested by the Planning Commission and the concerns raised by the neighbor, staff is recommending that the same conditions remain in place for the proposed project.

The additional information provided by the applicant illustrates that the neighbor’s window will be shaded by the second floor during the winter months unless the addition is pushed completely to the south side of the structure. An alternative, that is not illustrated, is a reduction in the depth of the south side of the second floor, which would reduce the amount of time the neighbors window is shaded during the winter months.
Floor Area Ratio: As noted in the February 8, 2010 report, the average FAR for the neighborhood is 39%, while the average for the newer contemporary homes in the former Inverness School site is 47%. Floor Area Ratios for the immediate neighborhood have been included below for reference.

Expected Impact on the Surroundings: The proposed project will have minimal impacts on the surrounding properties. It has been designed in a manner that is sensitive to the surrounding architecture and neighborhood pattern and scale.

Conclusion

The proposed addition complies with the intent of the Solar Access requirements, and the proposed architecture is compatible with the existing neighborhood. If the Planning Commission determines that the shading of the adjacent neighbor’s roof needs to be further reduced then the Planning Commission should consider the following changes to Condition of Approval #3A as a means to address the proposed bulk and mass and proximity to a single story home (not based on Solar Access):

3. DESIGN/EXTERIOR COLORS AND MATERIALS
   A. The building permit plans shall incorporate the following changes which shall be subject to review and approval by the Director of Community Development prior to issuance of building permit:
      1) Provide an additional 4 foot setback on the right side of the proposed second floor.
      2) The gable located over the new second floor bedroom shall be changed to a hipped roof element.
      2) The second floor master bath shall be relocated to the south side of the structure, providing an increased front setback for the north side of the proposed second floor.

Findings and General Plan Goals: The Findings are located in Attachment A. Staff is recommending the Conditions of Approval shown in Attachment B.

Alternatives

1. Approve the Design Review with the conditions in Attachment B.
2. Approve the Design Review with the conditions in Attachment B, striking condition 3A(1) and adding the following:
   The second floor master bath shall be relocated to the south side of the structure, providing an increased front setback for the north side of the proposed second floor.
3. Approve the Design Review with modified conditions as determined by the Planning Commission.

4. Deny the Design Review and provide direction to staff and the applicant where changes should be made.

**Recommendation**

Alternative 1.

Prepared by:

Shaunn Mendrin  
Project Planner

Reviewed by:

Gerri Caruso  
Principal Planner

Attachments:

A. Recommended Findings  
B. Recommended Conditions of Approval  
C. Site and Architectural Plans  
D. Supplemental Information Requested by Planning Commission  
E. Planning Commission Draft Minutes, February 8, 2010

Reference:

Planning Commission Report, dated February 8, 2010

This may accessed at the following link:  

Revised 2/18/2010
**Recommended Findings – Design Review**

The proposed project is desirable in that the project’s design and architecture conforms with the policies and principles of the Single Family Home Design Techniques.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single Family Design Techniques</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Respect the scale, bulk and character of the homes in the adjacent neighborhood.</strong></td>
<td>The proposed additions are sited appropriately and the use of varied setbacks and architectural elements reduce the apparent mass of the structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.5 B Use roof forms, orientations and ridge heights similar to those in the adjacent neighborhood.</strong> For example, where nearby homes along a street front have prominent gables facing the street, include gable elements of a similar scale and pitch facing the street on the new home or addition.</td>
<td>The applicant proposes to use roof forms that are compatible with the existing structure and surrounding homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.5 E. Keep first and second floor eave heights at the same general height as adjacent homes to minimize the visual bulk of the new construction.</strong> The recent desire for taller interior ceiling heights should be achieved through interior open spaces or cathedral ceilings, rather than taller exterior walls and higher eave heights, unless the taller heights are consistent with adjacent homes.</td>
<td>The proposed addition maintains the existing plate and eave heights complimenting the existing structure and neighborhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.6 A. New homes and additions to existing structures should be located to minimize blockage of sun access to living spaces and actively used outdoor areas on adjacent homes.</strong></td>
<td>The proposal is a one story addition to the rear of the home, minimizing any solar access impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.6 C. Windows should be placed to minimize views into the living spaces and yard spaces near neighboring homes. When windows are needed and desired in side building walls, they should be modest in size and not directly opposite windows on adjacent homes.</strong></td>
<td>The proposed second floor addition will have minimal privacy impacts since side windows have been placed in areas that are not as frequently used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.7 Use materials that are compatible with the neighborhood.</strong></td>
<td>The proposed materials will be visually similar to other materials found in the neighborhood.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommended Conditions of Approval – Design Review

In addition to complying with all applicable City, County, State and Federal Statutes, Codes, Ordinances, Resolutions and Regulations, Permittee expressly accepts and agrees to comply with the following conditions of approval of this Permit:

Unless otherwise noted, all conditions shall be subject to the review of approval of the Director of Community Development.

1. GENERAL CONDITIONS

A. The project shall be in conformance with the plans approved at the public hearing(s). Minor changes may be approved by the Director of Community Development. Major changes shall be subject to approval at a public hearing.

B. The Conditions of Approval shall be reproduced on the cover page of the plans submitted for a Building permit for this project.

C. The Design Review shall be null and void two years (Ordinance 2895-09) from the date of approval by the final review authority at a public hearing if the approval is not exercised, unless a written request for an extension is received prior to the expiration date.

D. The Building permit plans shall be in substantial conformance with the Planning Commission approved plans and planning application.

E. No trees are proposed for removal as part of this project. A separate tree removal permit shall be required for removal of protected trees in the future (SMC 19.94.030(4)).

F. A tree protection plan shall be submitted for any existing trees on the site. Provide an inventory and valuation of any trees proposed to be removed prior to issuance of building permits. The tree protection plan shall include measures noted in Sunnyvale Municipal Code Section 19.94.120 and at a minimum:

- **Inventory:** An inventory shall be taken of all existing trees on the plan including the valuation of all ‘protected trees’ by a certified arborist, using the latest version of the “Guide for Plant Appraisal” published by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). All existing (non-orchard) trees shall be shown on the plans, indicating size and varieties, and clearly specify which are to be retained.
• **Fencing**: Provide fencing around the drip line of the trees that are to be saved and ensure that no construction debris or equipment is stored within the fenced area during the course of demolition and construction.

2. **COMPLY WITH OR OBTAIN OTHER PERMITS**
   
   A. Obtain Building Permits as required for all proposed demolition and construction.

3. **DESIGN/EXTERIOR COLORS AND MATERIALS**
   
   A. The building permit plans shall incorporate the following changes which shall be subject to review and approval by the Director of Community Development prior to issuance of building permit:
   
   1) Provide an additional 4 foot setback on the right side of the proposed second floor.
   
   2) The gable located over the new second floor bedroom shall be changed to a hipped roof element.

   B. Final exterior building materials and color scheme are subject to review and approval of the Planning Commission/Director of Community Development prior to issuance of a building permit.
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project consists of a 2,302 sq. ft. addition on the
right side of the home. This will incorporate a new
master bedroom on the second floor, which will replace
the current bedroom/living area. The new bedroom will
accommodate a king-size bed and include a full
bathroom. The existing kitchen will be relocated to
the left side of the home, and the existing living room
will be expanded. An additional master bathroom will
be added on the first floor. The existing garage will
be converted into a new laundry room.

ACCORDINGLY, two (2) B.I. drawings
will be issued,

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D
AM SHADOW ANALYSIS (WITH EXISTING HOUSE ONLY)

SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 8, 2010

2009-0874: Design Review to allow a 1,469 square foot addition to an existing 2,018 square foot home totaling 3,487 square feet with 56% Floor Area Ratio for a site located at 1560 Grackle Way (APN: 309-33-009) SM

Shaunn Mendrin, Senior Planner, presented the staff report. He said staff recommends approval of the Design Review with the conditions in Attachment B.

Comm. Klein discussed with staff the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) percentages including what the percentage would be with staff's recommendation, requiring an additional 4 foot setback. Comm. Klein referred to the findings in Attachment A and discussed with staff wording regarding windows in non frequented places, the second floor addition, and privacy impacts. Staff confirmed that there are no privacy issues that staff is aware of and discussed the location of the windows. Trudi Ryan, Planning Officer, further discussed the types of glass typically used in windows considering privacy impacts, and further commented about the FAR percentages.

Comm. Sulser discussed with staff the recommendation to change one of the proposed gables to a hipped roof element with staff clarifying which gable would be changed.

Comm. Rowe referred to page 5 of the report and had staff clarify the section about "due to recent Zoning Code changes" and staff recommending the 4 foot right side setback for the second floor. Mr. Mendrin explained the recent changes to the code in December, 2009 and the reasoning for the recommendations.

Comm. Hungerford referred to page 4 of the report and discussed with staff the size of the second floor. Ms. Ryan commented that to one side of this home are mostly two story homes and to the other side are mostly one-story homes. She said the final design may be based on how the Commission feels about this home becoming a part of the two story portion of the neighborhood. Comm. Hungerford discussed with staff what a hipped roof treatment is.

Comm. Rowe discussed the limits of lot coverage with staff.

Chair Chang opened the public hearing.

Shilpa Pathare, architect representing the applicant, said that they are in agreement with everything except two conditions on page 2 of Attachment B. She discussed conditions 3.A.1 and 3.A.2 which were the changes provided by staff: requiring the additional 4 foot setback on the right side of the second floor;
and the requirement to change the gable over the new second floor bedroom to a hipped roof element. She requested that the Commission drop the two conditions and allow the design as proposed explaining the reasons for the proposed design.

Comm. Klein asked the Ms. Pathare to clarify part of the design including that the second story section which is 15 feet long, and that there is a slanted roof over the family room on the first floor.

Comm. McKenna asked the applicant to clarify part of the design including the family room on the first floor, and the master bedroom on the second floor.

Arthur Schwartz, a Sunnyvale resident, said he thinks the main issue with this project is compatibility, and not just the details, as the neighborhood changes at this house site and the two story houses are creeping down into the one story neighborhood. He said the proposed house would result in a high FAR and staff and the Commission need to consider if the large expansion is the model wanted for the future to maintain a compatible city.

Peter and Anne McCloskey, Sunnyvale residents, said their house is the first one-story house next to the proposed project. Mr. McCloskey said they have one window on the side of the house closest to the project and the highest point of the project is closest to their house. He said they are concerned about the light through that kitchen window being blocked due to the project height. Ms. McCloskey said from looking at the plans, it looks like the light would be blocked.

Ms. Ryan responded to a prior Commission question that the staff recommendation to move the wall in by 4 feet on the right side of the second story would reduce the FAR by 1%.

Ms. Pathare addressed the McClosky’s concern about the kitchen window and said there is a tree near that area that already blocks whatever light that could be blocked and that she does not think the proposed addition would make a significant difference in the amount of light into the window. Ms. Pathare said that she believes the project as proposed would have a 54% FAR.

Comm. Hungerford asked Ms. Pathare about the shadow analysis in the report confirming that she provided this information. Ms. Ryan explained the shadow analysis and that it refers to the roof shading and not the neighbor’s kitchen window. Comm. Hungerford discussed further with staff the location of the neighbor’s kitchen window with the neighbor indicating that the window is toward the front of their house.
Comm. Rowe asked further about the shading of the neighbor's kitchen window with staff explaining that the shadow studies are based on the shading of the roof for solar access at certain times of the day.

Chair Chang closed the public hearing.

Comm. Rowe asked staff further about wall setback on the second story.

Comm. Hungerford discussed the shadowing studies with staff. Comm. Hungerford asked staff if there is a vaulted ceiling on the first floor. Mr. Mendrin said the family room has a vaulted ceiling and that the actual FAR for this project would be 52%, discussing the height of the proposed house.

Comm. McKenna referred to page 7 of Attachment C and discussed with staff the shadowing of the neighbor's roof from the proposed project.

Comm. Hungerford asked staff about the design and the vaulted ceiling, and discussed with staff why the tallest part of roof is next to the neighbor's house. Ms. Ryan referred to pages 6 and 7 of Attachment C and discussed the design including the height.

Comm. Rowe discussed with staff that the roof design on the outside is a result of accommodating the proposed design on the inside.

Comm. McKenna commented that the shading of the neighboring house concerns her and she is wrestling with how best to preserve sunlight for the neighbors.

Comm. Rowe said that the conditions the staff have recommended are important and that she thinks the shading of the neighbor's window is also an important issue. Ms. Ryan referred to the roof shadow plans and said if the kitchen area is behind the garage that it appears the kitchen window would be shaded in the morning and not in the afternoon, not considering shading from trees.

Comm. Klein discussed with staff possibly increasing the setback by 4 feet on the left side of the second floor instead of the right side and asked if this would change the height of the roof, as it would reduce FAR and the shading to the neighbor. Mr. Mendrin said he is not sure what the exact results would be with that design change.
Comm. Hungerford discussed other possible design changes with staff to reduce the size with staff saying the applicant might not be happy with the suggested changes.

Ms. Ryan said that it seems there is more information that the Commission desires about the location and shadowing of the neighbor's kitchen window. She said the Commission could take an action on the project this evening, or could request additional information about shadowing and the location of the neighbor's kitchen window.

Comm. Rowe moved to continue this item to the Planning Commission meeting of February 22, 2010 requesting additional information regarding the location of the neighbor's window and the shadowing of the neighbor's window from the proposed addition. Comm. Rowe said she would like the motion to include for staff to work with the architect to see if there is a way to reduce the height of the peak of roof on the second floor. Comm. Hungerford seconded the motion.

Comm. McKenna reiterated that she is more concerned about the neighbor's kitchen window being shadowed than she is with moving the wall in on the second story.

Comm. Klein said he would like the privacy impacts clarified fully before the next meeting including the windows and which windows are opaque.

Comm. Sulser said that he shares staff's concern about the bulk and mass of the proposed project and that when this item comes back to the Commission that he'd like to make sure those items are still considered.

**ACTION:** Comm. Rowe made a motion on 2009-0874 to continue this item to the February 22, 2010 Planning Commission to allow time for the applicant to provide more information on the location of the neighbor's kitchen window and the potential shadowing resulting from the addition; and for staff to work with the architect to possibly reduce the height of the peak of the second floor. Comm. Klein requested clarification on the proposed side windows on the second floor regarding privacy impacts and what windows are opaque to be included in the additional information provided for February 22, 2010. Comm. Hungerford seconded. Motion carried, 7-0.

**APPEAL OPTIONS:** This action serves a legal notification of the continuance of this item to the February 22, 2010 Planning Commission meeting.