



TO: Nick Zornes, Zoning Administrator

FROM: Jia Liu, Associate Planner

SUBJECT: SC23-0015 – 628 Cuesta Drive

RECOMMENDATION

Approve design review application SC23-0015 for modifications to an approved residential addition project (file No. SC21-0046) to allow a 2,257 square foot first floor addition and 1,077 square foot second floor addition to an existing home; subject to the listed findings and conditions of approval; and find the project categorically exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15301 (“Existing Facilities”).

BACKGROUND

Project Description

- Project Location: 628 Cuesta Drive, located on south side of Cuesta Drive between Springer Road and Campbell Avenue
- Lot Size: 11,850 square feet
- General Plan Designation: Single-Family, Medium Lot (SF4)
- Zoning Designation: R1-10
- Current Site Conditions: Under construction with the existing second story demolished.

On May 4, 2022, the Design Review Commission (DRC) approved design review application (SC21-0046) for a 26 square-foot first floor addition and 542 square-foot second floor addition to an existing two-story home. The Design Review SC21-0046 agenda package for the May 4, 2022 DRC meeting is provided in Attachment A. The proposed addition on the second floor was designed to connect to the existing second floor which was granted a variance in 1964 (64-V-184) for a five-foot, second-floor side setback reduction to the required 15-foot setback. A building permit (BLD22-01535) was issued on May 12, 2023, for the construction of the approved project.

On July 19, 2023, a Stop Work Order was issued by the Building Division because portions of the original first floor and entire second floor which were shown to remain on the approved plans were demolished down to the foundation. Since the demolition removed the original second floor, the allowance of the reduced second floor setback granted by the variance was nullified and the second floor must be rebuilt to comply with current development standards, including the current second floor setback. Additionally, because the home no longer contains a second floor, the rebuilding of the second floor requires review by the Zoning Administrator at a public hearing per Section 14.76.040.

Zoning Administrator
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October 4, 2023

The applicant has modified the project scope to accommodate the current development standards which includes the following modifications:

- Demolition of the original 578 square-foot second floor.
- Redesign of the second-story addition with a side setback of 18.96 feet and a total area size of 1,077 square feet.
- Addition of 172 square feet to the first floor to support the redesign of the second floor.
- Corresponding exterior changes at both the first and second floor.

ANALYSIS

Design Review

The modified project complies with the R1-10 district development standards found in LAMC Chapter 14.06, as demonstrated by the following table:

	Existing	Proposed	Allowed/Required
COVERAGE:	2,039 square feet	2,257 square feet	3,555 square feet
FLOOR AREA: First floor Second floor Total	2,039 square feet 578 square feet 2,039 square feet	2,257 square feet 1,077 square feet 3,334 square feet	3,935 square feet
SETBACKS: Front Rear Right side (1 st /2 nd) Left side (1 st /2 nd)	25 feet 52.83 feet 21.17 feet/-- feet 10 feet/-- feet	25 feet 25.00 feet 20.17 feet/ 58.08 feet 10 feet/18.96 feet	25 feet 25 feet 10 feet/17.5 feet 10 feet/17.5 feet
HEIGHT:	19.67 feet	22.96 feet	27 feet

The modified project continues to comply with the Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines because it exhibits an appropriate design with elements, materials, scale, and landscaping that are consistent with the neighborhood.

The surrounding neighborhood is considered a Consistent Character Neighborhood after the original two-story house was demolished according to the Design Guidelines. The immediate neighborhood is comprised of one-story houses with mostly ranch styles. The homes in the neighborhood exhibit similar front setback patterns, massing, and a combination of simple and complex roof forms due to past renovations and upgrades. The horizontal eave lines at the first story typically range from approximately eight to nine feet in height. Many of the homes feature attached garages in the front yard facing the street.

The front elevation of the proposed two-story house is designed in a modern ranch architectural style to be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, incorporating hipped roof forms, articulated architectural massing on both the first and second floors, a horizontal eave line, and a four-foot and 10-inch projected entry porch with high-quality materials that are integrated into the overall architectural

design of the residence. The project was also found to minimize bulk by maintaining the same plate heights as approved in SC21-0046 including the first story plate heights of eight feet and nine feet and second-story plate height of eight feet and two inches.

The applicant will maintain all the existing evergreen screen vegetation and trees onsite as illustrated on Sheet A-1.3 of project plans (Attachment B).

The proposed project meets the development standards in the R1-10 zoning district and complies with the Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines because it is compatible with the character of the neighborhood as the design maintains an appropriate relationship with adjacent structures, minimizes bulk, and preserves existing trees.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review under Section 15301 (“Existing Facilities”) of the California Environmental Quality Act because it involves an addition to an existing single-family dwelling in a residential zone.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A public meeting notice was posted on the property, mailed to property owners within a 300-foot radius, and published in the Town Crier newspaper. The applicant also posted the public notice sign (24” x 36”) in conformance with the Planning Division posting requirements.

The applicant contacted nine neighbors in the immediate area for the community outreach. No comments from neighbors have been received by staff as of the writing of this report.

Attachment:

- A. SC21-0046 Agenda Package for the May 4, 2022 DRC Meeting
- B. Project Plans

Cc: Yun Li, Applicant and Property Owner

FINDINGS

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With regard to the proposed second-story residential addition, the Zoning Administrator finds the following in accordance with Section 14.76.060 of the Municipal Code:

- A. The proposed residential addition at both first and second floor complies with all provisions of this chapter because the proposed residence is consistent with the development standards of the R1-10 zoning district and policies and implementation techniques described in the Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines.
- B. The height, elevations, and placement on the site of the proposed new house is compatible when considered with reference to the nature and location of residential structures on adjacent lots, and will consider the topographic and geologic constraints imposed by particular building site conditions as the proposed home maintains a similar finished floor elevation and orientation on the lot as the existing home and complies with the allowable floor area, lot coverage, and height maximums as well as the daylight plane requirement pursuant to LAMC Chapter 14.06.
- C. The natural landscape will be preserved insofar as practicable by minimizing tree and soil removal; grade changes shall be minimized because the existing site is relatively level and does not require substantial grading and does not involve the removal of soil. No existing protected trees will be removed as part of the project.
- D. The orientation of the proposed new residence in relation to the immediate neighborhood will minimize the perception of excessive bulk and mass because the proposed structure incorporates architectural design features such as moderate scale, horizontal eave lines, building articulation, and roof forms that break up the massing and minimize excessive bulk.
- E. General architectural considerations, including the size and scale, the architectural relationship with the site and other buildings, building materials, and similar elements have been incorporated in order to insure the compatibility of the development with its design concept and the character of adjacent buildings on the same project site. The proposed home complies with the allowable floor area, lot coverage, and height maximums as well as the daylight plane requirement pursuant to LAMC Chapter 14.06 and the design of the home incorporates consistent and compatible features including composition shingle roofing, fiber cement siding exterior finish with fiber cement trims, fiber glass framed windows and doors.
- F. The proposed residential addition has been designed to follow the natural contours of the site with minimal grading, minimum impervious cover, and maximum erosion protection because the because the site is relatively flat and has incorporated softscape and hardscape surfaces into the plan and proposes a drainage plan to minimize off-site stormwater drainage.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

SC23-0015 – 628 Cuesta Drive

GENERAL

1. **Expiration**

The Design Review Approval will expire on October 4, 2025 unless prior to the date of expiration, a building permit is issued, or an extension is granted pursuant to Section 14.76.090 of the Zoning Code.

2. **Approved Plans**

The approval is based on the plans and materials received on August 30, 2023, except as may be modified by these conditions.

3. **SC21-0046 Conditions of Approval**

Otherwise modified by this design review approval, the Design Review Application SC21-0046 Conditions of Approval shall remain in full effect and valid for the life of the project.

4. **Building Permit**

Prior to continuation of the construction, the applicant shall apply for a revision to the issued building permit to the Building Division and obtain the approval of the revision.

5. **Encroachment Permit**

An encroachment permit shall be obtained from the Engineering Division prior to doing any work within the public right-of-way including the street shoulder. All work within the public street right-of-way shall be in compliance with the City's Shoulder Paving Policy.

6. **Underground Utility and Fire Sprinkler Requirements**

Additions exceeding fifty (50) percent of the existing living area (existing square footage calculations shall not include existing basements) and/or additions of 750 square feet or more shall trigger the undergrounding of utilities and new fire sprinklers. Additional square footage calculations shall include existing removed exterior footings and foundations being replaced and rebuilt. Any new utility service drops are pursuant to Chapter 12.68 of the Municipal Code.

7. **Indemnity and Hold Harmless**

The applicant/owner agrees to indemnify, defend, protect, and hold the City harmless from all costs and expenses, including attorney's fees, incurred by the City or held to be the liability of the City in connection with the City's defense of its actions in any proceedings brought in any State or Federal Court, challenging any of the City's action with respect to the applicant's project. The City may withhold final maps and/or permits, including temporary or final occupancy permits, for failure to pay all costs and expenses, including attorney's fees, incurred by the City in connection with the City's defense of its actions.

INCLUDED WITH THE BUILDING PERMIT SUBMITTAL

8. **Conditions of Approval**

Incorporate the conditions of approval into the title page of the plans and provide a letter which explains how each condition of approval has been satisfied and/or which sheet of the plans the information can found.

9. **Green Building Standards**

Provide verification that the house will comply with the California Green Building Standards pursuant to Chapter 12.26 of the Municipal Code and provide a signature from the project's Qualified Green Building Professional Designer/Architect and property owner.

10. Underground Utility Location

Show the location of underground utilities pursuant to Chapter 12.68 of the Municipal Code. Underground utility trenches shall avoid the drip-lines of all protected trees unless approved by the project arborist and the Planning Division.

PRIOR TO FINAL INSPECTION

11. Landscaping Installation and Verification

All landscaping materials, including plants or trees intended to provide privacy screening, as provided on the approved landscape plans shall be installed prior to final inspection. The applicant shall also provide a landscape Certificate of Completion, signed by the project's landscape professional and property owner, verifying that the trees, landscaping, and irrigation were installed per the approved landscape documentation package.

12. Green Building Verification

Submit verification that the house was built in compliance with the City's Green Building Ordinance (Chapter 12.26 of the Municipal Code).