



STAFF REPORT
CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS

For the Design Review
Commission Meeting of
August 7, 2008
080007343 / PL 0833726

TO: Design Review Commission

FROM: Ivy Nguyen, Assistant Planner

SUBJECT: A request for an R-1 Design Review Permit to allow a new two-story single-family residence, located in the Central Area of the City, north of Santa Monica Boulevard at **716 Alta Drive.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ben Kalaf and Vigen Pezeshkian, on behalf of the property owner, has filed an application for Track 2 design review to allow a new, two-story, 10,507 square foot single-family residence with basement located at **716 Alta Drive.** This project was presented before the Commission as a Preview and the Commission provided direction at the time that the design appeared to be more commercial than residential. Since the Preview, the applicant has redesigned the residence.

Reason for Review by the Commission

The proposed project does not strictly adhere to any pure architectural style as defined in the Style Catalogue, while there are features of the development that exhibit elements commonly found in Spanish residences.

Adherence to Zoning Code

As proposed, the main house, detached garage and accessory structure, walls, and fences meet all required zoning standards including height, setbacks, parking, and floor area requirements.

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Applicant	Ben Kalaf and Vigen Pezshkian
Project Owner	716 North Alta Drive, LLC
Zoning District	Central R-1 Area – North of Santa Monica Boulevard
Parcel Size	22,860 square feet
Listed in City's Historic Survey	No

SITE AND AREA CHARACTERISTICS

The project site is a rectangular-shaped lot that is approximately 105-feet wide by 215-feet long lot, located on east side of the 600 block of North Alta Drive between Elevado Avenue and Sunset Avenue. The existing residence will be demolished in order to allow for the construction of the proposed project. The abutting properties at the north and south property lines are developed with two-story single-family residences.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Building Envelope

The proposed residence would have a total floor area of 10,507 square feet, which is slightly less than the maximum allowable building area (10,642 square feet) for the subject site. As proposed, the residence will be 30'-7" to the highest point of the roof (32 feet maximum height is allowed as each side setback is at least 10').

Modulation

The main entrance to the principal building contains steps leading to the entry porch, with the main entry door setback 20' from the required 40' front setback. Several balconies at the front façade will create modulation along the principal building and adorned with black wrought iron fences.

In addition, a balcony at the first floor approximately six feet deep, and three balconies located on the second floor approximately nine feet deep will contribute to the modulation of the façade.

Additionally, the roof eaves at the second floor balconies project approximately seven feet.

Parking

As required by the BHMC, four parking spaces are required for the eight-bedroom project. Parking will be provided in a newly constructed two-car garage with access from the alley and three parking spaces in the basement. Access to the parking in the basement will be along the southern property line.

Design

The proposed design of the structure includes the following features:

- Two stories
- Clay tile roof
- Balconies with wrought iron railings
- Wood windows and front entry door
- Recessed arch top entry
- Stucco wall surface in white
- 6-foot tall wrought iron fence with pilasters at front elevation.

Materials

The materials and color proposed for the new structure are as follows:

- Façade stucco finish – beige color
- Trim stucco – white
- Mahogany wood custom door with glass and black ornamental iron work
- Malibu Southern California Collection Clay tile roof, terra cotta color
- Wrought iron railings and fence, black
- Italian Villa Stone (Stone Veneer Volterra, Coronado) at base of house
- Wood shutters on second floor

A material sample board will be submitted for the Commission's review at the meeting.

Paving

The applicant had proposed the circular driveway method as paving in the front yard, with dimensions as required in Section 10-3-2422 of the BHMC. The driveway approaches are 12' wide, with a four feet wide walkway leading to the residence and a nine feet wide driveway to access parking in the basement.

Landscape Design

The proposed project will provide for low-growing landscaping in front of the six-foot tall fence (with roses) and behind the fence (with four date palms and low growing shrubs). Four California Sycamore trees will be planted at the front of the residence.

Additionally, a total of four Koelreuteria bipinnatas (Chinese Flame tree), along with a variety of low-growing shrubs, will be planted along the walls at the rear along the northern and southern property lines abutting the neighbors.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

Notice of the proposed project and public hearing was mailed on July 21, 2008 to all property owners and residential tenants within a 100-foot radius from the exterior boundaries of the property as required by Code. To date, staff has not received any comments in regards to the submitted plans.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

The project has been reviewed to be in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the City's environmental guidelines, and a Categorical Exemption of Class 3(a) has been issued (construction of a single-family residence in a residential zone).

DESIGN ANALYSIS

Pursuant to BHMC Section 10-3-4415, the Design Review Commission may approve, approve with conditions, or disapprove the issuance of a building permit in any matter subject to its jurisdiction after considering whether the proposed development complies with the following criteria. If the proposed project meets the criteria set forth, the Commission shall approve the application. When the proposed development does not comply with the criteria, the Commission may impose such conditions it deems necessary to bring the proposed development into conformity with the provisions of this article.

- 1. The proposed development's design exhibits an internally compatible design scheme.***

The proposed design and architectural features exhibit several characteristics similar to those defined in the Design Catalogue for the Spanish residences. For example, recessed arched entryways, wooden shutters, and balconies with decorative iron work can be found on the front facade. The balance of the

proposed design appears to exhibit an internally compatible design scheme. The Commission may wish to discuss whether the iron fence surrounding the house is consistent with the style of the residence.

2. *Appropriately minimizes the appearance of scale and mass, enhances the garden like quality of the city, and appropriately maximizes the use of required open space within the proposed architectural style.*

The proposed design utilizes nearly the maximum amount of floor area permitted by the BHMC. The proposed height of the main residence is 30'-7" (maximum height allowed by Code is 32') with a front façade that measures 82' wide.

The proposed façade provides a degree of modulation as the entry porch with front entry steps are set back 20' behind required front setback of 40'. Additionally, several inset balconies on the first and second floors and roof eaves as previously discussed add additional modulation to the façade.

The proposed landscaping plan includes several date palms and California Sycamore trees at the front yard and a variety of low-growing plant materials that will enhance the garden quality of the city.

3. *The development will enhance the appearance of the neighborhood.*

The proposed project exhibits an internally compatible design scheme. The project utilizes thoughtful, high quality building materials including stucco walls with wood window trims and doors and wrought iron work (at the balconies and front gate), which will help to enhance the appearance of the neighborhood.

4. *The proposed development is designed to balance the reasonable expectation of development for the owner with the reasonable expectation of privacy of neighbors.*

The proposed project meets the side setbacks required. The applicant will be providing landscaping (Mexican Weeping Bamboo, two Chinese Flame trees and other low-growing plants) along the seven-foot tall fence at the north property line to provide privacy to the abutting neighbor. The provided (and required) side setback is 10'-6". There will be series of windows located on the second floor ranging from 2-6.5 feet wide by 2'-7" tall from the bedroom, linen closet, stairway, bathroom and walk-in closet. However, with the proposed landscaping of Mexican Weeping Bamboo on a 24" tall planter, the neighbors' privacy will not be significantly negatively impacted. Additionally, Chinese Flame trees and low-growing plants will be planted along the rear northern property line. The Commission may wish to discuss the type and amount of landscaping that should be maintained to ensure the neighbors' privacy.

The neighbor at the side elevation at the southern property line will be minimally impacted as a 15' wide driveway to basement parking and two small windows at the second floor measuring 2' wide by 6' tall from the master bedroom are specified on the plans. Additionally, two Chinese Flame trees, a citrus tree, a Euphorbia cotinifolia plant and low-growing plants will be provided along the rear of the block wall abutting the neighbor.

Therefore, the proposed project is not expected to create adverse impacts associated with privacy of neighbors.

- 5. The proposed development respects prevailing site design pattern, carefully analyzing the characteristics of the surrounding group of homes, and integrates appropriate features that will ensure harmony between old and new.***

The properties along North Alta Drive are developed with structures varying in size and scale and there does not appear to be a consistent design pattern at present. New two-story residences built to the maximum floor area and parking at the ground level can be seen in the neighborhood. The subterranean parking as designed will likely integrate with the prevailing characteristics of the neighborhood. Therefore, it appears that the proposed development is in harmony with the old and new residences in the surrounding area.

Upon consideration of criteria set forth in BHMC 10-3-4415, The Commission has the following options:

1. Approve the plans as presented;
2. Approve the plans subject to the following and /or other conditions, to bring the plans into conformance with criteria set forth in BHMC 10-3.4415;
3. Disapprove the plans upon detailed findings that certain criteria set forth in BHMC 10-3.4415 are not met; or
4. Return the plans for restudy and re-submittal.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the foregoing analysis and pending the information and conclusions that may result from testimony received at the public hearing, as well as Design Review Commission deliberations, Staff recommends the Design Review Commission either provide the applicant with further direction and return the item for restudy, or approve the project with the following conditions and any other conditions the Commission may wish to add:

1. Landscaping along the side property lines shall be protected / maintained and/or replaced as necessary to ensure appropriate screening of the residence.
2. Landscaping and/or a planter be provided and maintained at the southern property line at the driveway adjacent to the subterranean parking.



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