



**STAFF REPORT**  
**CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS**

For the Design Review  
Commission Meeting of  
September 4, 2008

**TO:** Design Review Commission

**FROM:** Shena Rojemann, Assistant Planner

**SUBJECT:** A request for an R-1 Design Review Permit to allow new front yard fencing, paving and a façade remodel of an existing two-story single-family residence, located in the Central Area of the City, north of Santa Monica Boulevard at **714 North Palm Drive.**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Dan Lang and Ali Kia, on behalf of the property owner, Jamie Sohachesky, have filed an application for Track 2 design review to allow new front yard fencing and a façade remodel of an existing single-family residence at **714 North Palm Drive.**

This item was initially reviewed by the Commission at its August 7, 2008 meeting. At that meeting, the Commission heard presentations from staff and the applicant. The Commission recommended the design be re-studied and returned to the September 4, 2008 meeting addressing the following concerns:

- The entry façade looks very grand and out of scale with the rest of the facade;
- The carved travertine above the entryway appears to be heavy and ornate;
- The wrought iron on balconies is very ornate and does not seem to fit with the “Northern Italian” (as called out by the designer) style of architecture;
- The mansard roof is too small in comparison to the scale of the residence. The Commission suggested exploring other roof options;
- Break-up the stretch of wrought iron railing along the second floor with a low wall between to decrease the span of wrought iron (loggia);
- The wrought iron work on the front door is too heavy and ornate;
- A floor plan was not provided and would be helpful to the Commission;
- The Commission suggested a sub-committee be formed to further discuss design options.

### **SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING**

On August 20, 2008, the applicants Dan Lang and Ali Kia, along with staff and Vice Chair Gabbay and Commissioner Strauss met to further discuss design options.

After the subcommittee meeting, the applicants disclosed the design to the property owners. At that time, the property owners expressed concern with the overall look of the design. As a result, the applicants have made design changes other than what was discussed during the subcommittee meeting keeping in mind the direction provided at the subcommittee meeting.

### **REVISED DESIGN**

The applicant addressed the Commission's concerns above as follows:

- Low walls have been added along the second floor balconies to break-up the stretch of railings;
- The second story balconies have been slightly enclosed for a loggia-look defined by small columns;
- The depth mansard roof has been increased (from 5'-6" to approximately 10') to create improved proportion between the roof and the house. This was achieved by dropping the mansard down which also reduced some of the second floor wall mass;
- A parapet style roof has been added above the entryway;
- The window above the entryway has been shortened by the addition of a parapet roof feature;
- The applicant has redesigned the wrought iron gate and fence
- The second floor windows at each side of the façade now project 1'-4" from the façade with small roof caps.

The overall materials have not been revised; however, the stucco color has changed. A materials board will be presented at the meeting.

### **Code Compliance**

As proposed, the design meets all required zoning standards including height, setbacks, parking, and floor area requirements

### **PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS**

Notice of the proposed project and public hearing was mailed on July 28, 2008 to all property owners and residential tenants within a 100-foot radius from the exterior boundaries of the property as required by Code. At the August 7, 2008 meeting, the public hearing was continued to the September 4, 2008 meeting. To date staff has not received any comments in regard to the submitted plans.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

The project has been reviewed 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.

## **DESIGN REVIEW 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 criteria.

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

As revised the design appears to be more consistent with the "Italian" style of architecture and has incorporated design elements that are more internally compatible than the previously submitted design.

***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.***

As revised, the design more appropriately minimizes the appearance of scale and mass. The applicant has submitted a full landscaping plan which contains large existing trees, a variety of ground cover, shrubs, and trees in a variety of sizes and quantities which will enhance the garden-like quality of the City.

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

As proposed, the existing mature trees and the lush proposed landscaping shall help enhance the appearance of the neighborhood. Additionally, as stated in items 1) and 2) above, the revised design appears to be more consistent with the "Italian" style of architecture. As proposed, it appears the design could 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.***

As previously proposed, the existing side yard, front yard and rear yard setbacks shall not change and the window, door and balcony openings shall remain in the existing

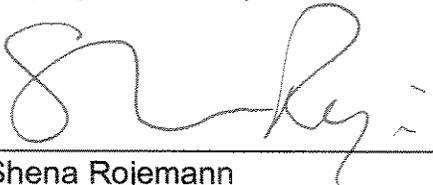
locations, thus having no effect on the existing privacy of the neighbors. Also, the addition of lush landscaping and maintaining the existing large trees shall help to enhance the privacy of the property owner and the neighbors.

- 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.***

As revised, the project is consistent with the prevailing design patterns of the surrounding neighborhood. The design patterns are characterized by items such as a circular driveway, a driveway leading from the circular drive to a garage and/or a porte cochere and a walkway leading from the circular drive to the entryway of the residence. Also common in the design pattern is a wall or fence along the front lot line and the residence is set back from the front lot line a distance comparable to the neighboring properties. Thus, having design patterns consistent with those of the neighboring properties will ensure harmony between old and new homes in the surrounding area.

### **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 that the Design Review Commission consider all of staff's recommendations and approve the project with any conditions the Commission may wish to add.



Shena Rojemann  
Assistant Planner

### **Attachments:**

Staff Report of August 7, 2008



**STAFF REPORT**  
**CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS**

For the Design Review  
Commission Meeting of  
August 7, 2008  
PL0825265

**TO:** Design Review Commission

**FROM:** Shena Rojemann, Assistant Planner

**SUBJECT:** A request for an R-1 Design Review Permit to allow new front yard fencing, paving and a façade remodel of an existing two-story single-family residence, located in the Central Area of the City, north of Santa Monica Boulevard at **714 North Palm Drive.**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Dan Lang and Ali Kia, on behalf of the property owner, Jamie Sohachesky, have filed an application for Track 2 design review to allow new front yard fencing and a façade remodel of an existing single-family residence at **714 North Palm Drive.**

The existing residence was constructed in early 1987. Due to faulty construction, the façade and the underlying structural elements of the residence have sustained extensive water damage. The owner is repairing the underlying structural elements as approved previously but is taking this opportunity to propose changes to the façade and the front yard.

Reason for Review by the Commission

While the proposed design does contain architectural elements that are common in the Italian Renaissance Revival style, the envelope of the existing residence will not change which has resulted in difficulty adhering to a pure architectural style as outlined in the Style Catalogue. As a result, the proposed project has been brought before the Design Review Commission as a Track 2 application for review of only the follow elements:

- Materials;
- Finishes;
- Entryway;
- Front yard wall.

Adherence to Zoning Code

As proposed, the design does not alter the existing height, setbacks, parking, and floor area of the house.

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Applicant	Dan Lang/Ali Kia
Project Owner	Jamie Sohachesky
Zoning District	Central R-1 Area – North of Santa Monica Boulevard
Parcel Size	24,774 square feet
Listed in City's Historic Survey	No

**SITE AND AREA CHARACTERISTICS**

The project site is approximately 103-feet wide by 230-feet long lot (lot average width and length), located on the east side of the 700 block of North Palm Drive between Elevado Avenue and Sunset Boulevard. The lot is currently developed with a two-story residence and attached three-car garage. The current residence and garage are to remain and shall undergo a façade remodel. New front yard paving and a new wrought iron fence shall be added to the front yard. Surrounding development consists of one- and two-story single-family homes.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant is proposing a façade remodel and changes to the roof. The proposed facade incorporates changes intended to be consistent with the Italian Renaissance Revival style. With this goal, the applicant has expressed a willingness to redesign the existing entry to a more human scale as presented in the plans as "Alternate West Elevation".

As proposed, the façade remodel shall not affect the floor plans or the footprint of the existing residence. The existing front yard setback which varies between 54 feet 10 inches (54'-10") at the entryway and 56 feet 4 inches (56'-4") along the remainder of the front façade (BHMC requires 55 feet) will not be altered. The façade remodel incorporates the change from a flat roof to a low-pitched hipped roof finished with terra cotta barrel roof tiles and overhanging eaves carried by wooden corbels. The new roof

style will not change the existing height of the structure, which shall remain at 28 feet (28'). The existing balconies shall remain and wrought iron railings are proposed. Travertine pilasters shall be incorporated onto the entryway façade, in addition to a decorative travertine grill, an ornamental wrought iron window, and an elaborate wrought iron and glass door. The new façade also integrates new windows, moldings and smooth stucco walls.

As proposed, the project includes a new wall along the front yard. The proposed wall is approximately 5 feet high. The top 3 feet is open to public view and decorated with elaborate wrought iron fencing. The wall also contains electric wrought iron gates for auto ingress and egress to the site.

### Design

The proposed design of the structure contains architectural elements that are commonly found in the "Italian Renaissance Revival" which includes the following features:

- Two stories;
- Fairly flat façade;
- Very low pitched hipped tiled roofs, extended into overhanging eaves;
- Wooden corbels;
- Symmetry and balance;
- Balconies.

### Materials

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

- Earth-toned smooth stucco (Burnished Ocher);
- Terra cotta barrel tiled roof (Roman pan tiles);
- Dark wood mahogany corbels;
- Travertine pilasters at the entry;

A material board will be presented at the meeting.

### Paving

Per the BHMC §10-3-2422, the total amount of paving permitted within the front yard of the subject site is 33% of the area of the front yard in addition to one walkway that does not exceed the area equal to five feet (5') in width multiplied by the front yard setback. The proposed project is in compliance with the BHMC.

### Landscape Design:

The proposed landscaping contains large existing trees and a diverse variety of shrubs, ferns, palms, and vines of various sizes and quantities. The detailed landscape plan depicts the lush detailed pattern of the various plants throughout the front yard. The proposed plants consist of a combination of drought tolerant and non-drought tolerant plants, which includes the following trees:

- Jacaranda tree (existing);
- Sycamore tree (existing);
- Palms (Cycas Revoluta) – 15 gallon.

### **PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS**

Notice of the proposed project and public hearing was mailed on July 28, 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 pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Sections 15000 et seq.), and the City's Local CEQA guidelines. A Class 3(a) (15303) Categorical Exemption (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) has been issued in accordance with the requirements of Section 15062.

### **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.***

As proposed, the envelope of the existing residence will not change which has resulted in difficulty to adhere to a pure architectural style as outlined in the Style Catalogue. The proposed design does contain architectural elements that are common in the Italian Renaissance Revival style of architecture as listed in this report and the proposed façade remodel (Alternate West Elevation) is more consistent with a pure architectural style than the previous design. The commission may wish to discuss the elaborate nature of the balcony railings and front yard fencing, and the heaviness of the entryway elements.

***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.***

As stated in item 1) above, as proposed, the façade (Alternate West Elevation) is more consistent with a pure architectural style, although the Commission may wish to discuss specific architectural elements that could reduce the scale and mass of the entry. The applicant has submitted a full landscape plan, which shows the existing mature vegetation is to remain. In addition, multiple new shrubs, ferns, palms, and vines shall be added thus enhancing the garden-like quality of the city.

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

The existing mature trees and the lush proposed landscaping shall help enhance the appearance of the neighborhood. Additionally, as stated in items 1) and 2) above, the residence shall provide a number of elements consistent with the Italian Renaissance Revival style of architecture however; the Commission may wish to discuss the scale and mass of the entry.

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

As proposed, the existing side yard, front yard and rear yard setbacks shall not change and the window, door and balcony openings shall remain in the existing locations, thus having no effect on the existing privacy of the neighbors. Also, the addition of lush landscaping and maintaining the existing large trees shall help to enhance the privacy of the property owner and the 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.***

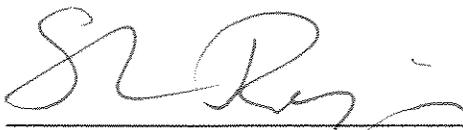
The house was built in 1987 and the house envelope is not proposed to change with the exception of the entryway design, front yard paving and the decorative wall along the front property line. As proposed, the project is consistent with the prevailing design patterns of the surrounding neighborhood. The design patterns are characterized by items such as a circular driveway, a driveway leading from the circular drive to a garage and/or a porte cochere and a walkway leading from the circular drive to the entryway of the residence. Also common in the design pattern is a wall or fence along the front lot line and the residence is set back from the front lot line a distance comparable to the neighboring properties. Thus, having design patterns consistent with those of the neighboring properties will ensure harmony between old and new homes 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 resubmittal.

### **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 that the Design Review Commission consider all of staff's recommendations and approve the project with any conditions the Commission may wish to add.

  
SHENA ROJEMANN  
Assistant Planner