



STAFF REPORT  
CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS

For the Design Review  
Commission Meeting of  
September 4, 2008  
PL 0834227

**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 812 North Alpine Drive.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

David Falk of Harrison Design Associates Architects, on behalf of the property owner, has filed an application for Track 2 design review to allow a new, two-story, 14,693 square foot single-family residence (including basement) with a 608 square foot detached accessory structure located at 812 North Alpine Drive.

The proposed project has been defined by the applicant as "English Palladian" style and supporting documentation has been submitted for the Commission's review.

**Reason for Review by the Commission**

The proposed development appears to be a pure architectural style. However, the proposed residence is located on a large lot at North Alpine Drive between Lomitas Avenue and Sunset Boulevard. Additionally, the property would be built to its maximum allowed floor area on the lot; proposing 10,052 square feet out of the allowable 10,287 square feet (note: this figure excludes the square footage for the basement, as permitted by Code). For these reasons, this project has been brought before the Commission for review.

Adherence to Zoning Code

The proposed accessory structure will be 19' tall, and will be subject to a separate review and approval of a minor accommodation permit as it is above 14' tall and encroaches in the required rear yard setback.

As proposed, the main house, walls and fence meets the required zoning standards including height, setbacks, parking, and floor area requirements.

The proposed accessory structure will require a review for an approval of a minor accommodation permit at the rear as the height of the structure will be above 14'. The accessory structure would be hidden from public view by the main house, and as a result, would not require design review if approved.

<b>GENERAL INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Applicant</b>	David Falk of Harrison Design Associates Architects
<b>Project Owner</b>	Alpine Investment Group
<b>Zoning District</b>	R-1.X Central R-1 Area – North of Santa Monica Boulevard
<b>Parcel Size</b>	21,980 square feet
<b>Listed in City's Historic Survey</b>	Yes (See "Environmental Determination")

**SITE AND AREA CHARACTERISTICS**

The project site is a rectangular-shaped lot that is approximately 100-feet wide by 220-feet long lot (lot average width and length), located on the east side of the 800 block of North Alpine Drive between Lomitas Avenue and Sunset Boulevard. The current property contains a two-story residence with a two-story accessory building at the rear of the property. The existing residence and accessory buildings will be demolished in order to allow for the construction of the proposed project.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Building Envelope / Modulation

The proposed residence would have a total floor area of 10,052 square feet, which is nearly the maximum allowable building area (10,287 square feet) for the subject site.

The residence will be 32' to the highest point of the roof (32 feet maximum height allowed, as each side setback is at least 10'). The residence will be a 2-story structure, with a basement leading to subterranean parking.

The main entrance to the proposed structure consists of a stone and brick front façade. The façade is mostly flat, as characteristic of English Palladian architectural style residences. The main entrance with stairs leading to the residence is set back 12'-6" behind the required 45' front setback. Additionally, there are two light wells located on either side of the stairs at the front of the property, two light wells at the rear of the property, and one at the northern property line; varying in width from 11'-6" to 21' and in depth from 4'-6" to 8'. These light wells serve as light and air for the basement as well as additional setbacks for the proposed house. They would be shielded from the street by landscaping.

Windows at the first and second floors are inset approximately 1'-6" deep. The center section at the second story contains a door inset 3'-6" and two doors inset 2'-6".

### Parking

As required by the BHMC, four parking spaces are required for the 8-bedroom project (six bedrooms in the main residence, two bedrooms at the guesthouse). The proposed parking will be provided in the basement, with access from the driveway from the front of the property. Access to the parking will be assisted with a car turntable, and accessibility is under review from the Department of Public Works. A new curb cut will be required for access to the circular driveway, which is also under review with Public Works.

### Design

The proposed design of the structure includes the following features:

- Two stories
- Fairly flat façade, with some entryway modulation
- Symmetry and balance
- Upper story shorter than lower story
- Low pitched hipped roof

As proposed, the balance of the design appears to adhere to the characteristics typically found in a combination of English Palladian style residences.

### Materials

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

- Gray colored slate roof

The findings of the August 2008 study state that the structure displays character-defining elements of the French Revival style and appears to be relatively intact when viewed from the street. However, sandblasted exterior brickwork and the installation of vinyl windows have compromised the level of potential historical significance of the property.

The report concludes the residence "has been so altered that it would fail to meet the architectural criteria for a local monument listing, in spite of the prominence of the architect and the purity of the original design" (page 35 of the Historical Evaluation document). Furthermore, the historian contends that the property does not appear to be eligible for an individual listing at a higher level even if restored, due to the lack of strong historic importance of its owners. As the City does not presently have a local preservation ordinance, any individual listing would have to be made at a higher level.

The preponderance of evidence demonstrates that this resource is not historically or culturally significant. As such, 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 are similar to those defined in the Design Catalogue for Palladian styles. The balance of the proposed design appears to exhibit an internally compatible design scheme in an English theme.

***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 32' tall, permitted by the BHMC as each side setback equals or exceeds 10'.

The Project Description section further describes the modulation of the proposed residence. While the project exhibits an internally compatible design scheme, the architectural style of the residence is a grand, imposing style. As the English Palladian style of architecture typically features a fairly flat façade, the applicant is proposing landscaping and will be setting the residence 9' behind the required front setback of 45', both of which will minimize the appearance of scale and mass. Additionally, the number of windows specified on the plans on all elevations of the residence provides further dimension to the façade.

The Commission may wish to consider whether the front fence appropriately maximizes the use of required open space within the Palladian architectural style. The fence is set back approximately 10' from the front property line, and conforms to the BHMC height restrictions.

Additionally, the Commission may wish to consider as a condition to provide landscaping at the southern elevation adjacent to the driveway ramp to provide additional screening and privacy for the southerly neighbor.

The proposed landscaping plan includes a variety of plant materials and will enhance the garden quality of the city.

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

As discussed in criteria 1 and 2 above, the proposed project appears to exhibit an internally compatible design scheme. The project utilizes thoughtful, high quality building materials including stone and brick walls, wood doors and window shutters, and decorative wrought iron balconies, 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.***

As discussed in item 2 above, the proposed project utilizes the maximum amount of floor area allowed by the BHMC, and may benefit from additional modulation at the north and south elevations, which would help to create a better balance between development potential and the privacy of adjacent properties.

At the northern elevation, a series of five windows on the second floor measuring 18' wide by 7' tall may affect the privacy of the neighbors. However, as the windows are located at the staircase, it is not anticipated that the windows will be

utilized for long periods of time. Additionally, seven windows each measuring 3' wide by 5' tall located in bedrooms, bathrooms and a den are not anticipated to affect the privacy of the neighbors.

At the southern elevation, five small windows from the bathrooms and bedroom are located on the second floor. The windows are not anticipated to negatively impact the privacy of the neighbors.

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 Alpine Drive are developed with a number of large, two-story structures. Therefore, it appears that the proposed development's architectural style will fit in with the streetscape and 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. Applicant provide and maintain vegetation at the southern elevation to provide a landscaping buffer at the driveway ramp to the subterranean parking.



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