

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD RECORD OF DECISION

Meeting Date May 25, 2017 DRB Case No. PDR 1703667
 Address 2653 Manhattan Ave.
 Applicant Graham Dodson

PROPOSAL: Demolition of the existing buildings on-site including a one-story, 841 square-foot single-family house and detached garage constructed in 1947 and construct two new units (duplex). The project is located on a through lot and designed as one, two-story building with a private attached parking garage per unit facing a street; one unit will front Manhattan Avenue and the second will front Pickens Street. The total combined floor area for both units will be 3,332 square feet, not including the attached 441 square-foot, two-car garage per unit, located on a 7,022 square-foot through lot in the R-3050 (Moderate Density Residential) Zone.

DESIGN REVIEW

Board Member	Motion	Second	Yes	No	Absent	Abstain
Charchian					X	
Benlian		X	X			
Malekian			X			
Simonian	X		X			
Totals			3	0		
DRB Decision	Approved with conditions					

Conditions:

1. Redesign the Pickens Street façade to better reflect a street front design as proposed on the Manhattan Avenue in terms of roof design, articulation details, and the following modifications:
 - Step back the 2nd floor, thereby creating a break in plane;
 - Push back the front entry/stair enclosure to further undulate the front elevation.
2. Restudy the northwest interior/side elevation in terms of symmetry, window placement and column proportions.
3. Omit the crawl space and propose a slab foundation, or reduce the floor to ceiling height by one foot if maintaining a raised foundation, in order to reduce the overall mass and better conform to the sloping topography of the site.
4. Submit an accurate site plan, which corresponds to the landscape plan and elevations, that clearly depicts existing and finish grade, all walls (retaining, free-standing, garden, etc.), spot elevations, topography, proposed cut and fill, etc.
5. Submit accurate cross sections for the building that identify the spot elevations.
6. Examine the possibility of using low garden walls to address the sloped topography and contours of the site, and provide details/plans for the removal and/or relocation of the existing stone retaining wall on Manhattan Avenue for staff review and approval.
7. Submit a window detail (cross-section) to show all windows to be constructed with a wood (or wood-like) surround and sill (exterior grids only).
8. Submit cut sheet(s) for proposed light fixtures to be used on the building and ensure that light will shine away from adjacent neighbors.

Analysis

Site Planning: The proposed site planning is appropriate to the site and its surroundings, as modified by any conditions, for the following reasons:

- The new two-story residential duplex is designed as one building with each unit having a private two-car attached on-grade parking garage, fully integrated with the overall structure and consistent with other residential buildings in the neighborhood.
- The duplex is designed with a rectangular building footprint, which is consistent with the shape of the lot and appropriately setback from the front and side property lines per Zoning regulations and the Comprehensive Design Guidelines.
- Each unit will have a private front entry patio/porch facing the street, similar to a single-family house. Having private patios/porches on the ground floor only is appropriate because it respects the privacy of adjacent homes by not including second floor balconies.
- Each unit will have private vehicular driveway access to the garage located at the front of each unit facing the street, which is consistent with numerous other properties in the neighborhood.
- As proposed, the applicant has made an effort to design a building footprint that thoughtfully considers and avoids undermining the existing oak tree roots and canopies. For example, the western façade of the building is setback between five and twenty feet from the property line. This generous setback will accomplish preservation and viability of the existing oak trees in this area. Further, there are two oak trees along the east side of the property where the building is setback a minimum of five to eleven feet. As a result, the existing mature oaks will be preserved and continue to enhance the property and the neighborhood streetscape.
- The building footprint allows flexibility for private and common open spaces. For example, the common open space area located on the west side of the property, nestled in a shady area underneath the large canopy of two mature oaks is prime and thoughtfully integrates with the building and landscape design concept. Further, outdoor amenities (e.g., seating benches) are incorporated in this area as required by Code and suggested by the Design Guidelines.

Mass and Scale: The proposed mass and scale are appropriate to the site and its surroundings, as modified by any conditions, for the following reasons:

- The new structure will provide appropriate setbacks given its location on the site, existing protected oak trees and its relationship to surrounding buildings.
- The roof design, building mass and proportions are consistent with the Craftsman style of the building and the neighborhood context.
- The building's two-story mass and overall height of 26'0" fits well with the surrounding one- and two-story buildings in the neighborhood.
- The building facades consist of varying forms, volumes, appropriate setbacks, and architectural design treatment including color combinations, a trellis, roof design, breaks in plane, fenestration, wood details, etc. Applying this technique serves to accentuate the design and minimize a boxy outline, especially along the sides of the building as recommended by the Guidelines.
- While most of the buildings on the immediate street block are one-story, the project's articulation, ground floor recesses and further recesses on the second floor, discrete building forms, and overall mass and scale help avoid being overbearing in the overall neighborhood context. This design approach complements the style of the building and the smaller buildings on the immediate street block.
- The use of multiple gables at the Manhattan Avenue elevation appropriately balances the massing as viewed from the street.
- As conditioned, the Pickens Street elevation will include similar articulation details as the Manhattan Avenue front façade.
- The variety of materials and details helps to reinforce the reading of different volumes and appropriately articulates the building facades and reduces the mass and scale of the two-story volume.
- The project's mass and scale integrates with the immediate street block and other buildings in the neighborhood for the following reasons: The ground floor and further recessed second floor are appropriately setback, the front facades are designed similar to that of a single-family home, the use of various volumes, breaks in the facades, openings, etc., breaks in the roof, the use of architectural details, use of fenestration, and breaks in plane, all contribute to softening the building's mass and scale. As a result, the building does not have an overwhelming appearance and complements the neighborhood context.
- The project's rhythm and variety of massing configuration appears to be the predominant aspect of the design, with the focus on gables, volumes and the staggered setbacks.

Building Design and Detailing: The proposed building design and detailing are appropriate to the site, as modified by any conditions, and its surroundings for the following reasons:

- The design of the building is a modern interpretation of the Craftsman style and is appropriate to the site with existing mature oak trees and the neighborhood.
- The warm gray/green siding color is appropriate and complements the white accent color depicted on the windows, window trim, porch columns, rafter tails, fascia and trellis. Overall, the proposed color palette integrates well with the existing on-site vegetation and other buildings in the neighborhood, which are painted with neutral colors.
- The combination of materials including horizontal siding throughout and stone cladding on the base of the front facades and porch columns are appropriate and integrates well with the “woody” feel of the site and the existing stone walls on the property. In addition, the wood window trim, wood trellis and front porch columns, wood rafter tails, etc., all enhance and complements the building facades and the neighborhood.
- White color fiberglass, single-hung multi-light windows with wood trim complements the Craftsman style of the building. A condition will be added to ensure that all windows have exterior muntins. As proposed, the windows are appropriate to the design and the neighborhood in terms of their operation and overall appearance.
- The gray color asphalt shingle roof material is appropriate to the Craftsman inspired design of the house and the neighborhood. The roof is designed with various sized gable forms. This design approach complements the design of the building and includes breaks at appropriate locations.
- The design features many of the character-defining features associated with the Craftsman style, including horizontal siding, exposed woodwork, a focal front entry for each unit facing a street, windows, roof design including wide gables, and eave details with rafter tails, all complementary to the chosen style and the neighborhood.

The Design Review Board approves the design of projects only. Approval of a project by the Design Review Board does not constitute an approval of compliance with the Zoning Code and/or Building Code requirements.

If an appeal is not filed within the 15-day appeal period of the Design Review Board decision, plans may be submitted for Building and Safety Division plan check. **Prior** to Building and Safety Division plan check submittal, Design Review Board approved plans must be stamped approved by Design Review Board staff. **Any** changes to the approved plans may constitute returning to the Design Review Board for approval. **Prior** to Building and Safety Division plan check submittal, **all** changes in substantial conformance with approved plans by the Design Review Board must be on file with the Planning Division.

Please make an appointment with the case planner for DRB stamp/sign-off prior to submitting for Building plan check.

DRB Staff Member Milca Toledo, Senior Planner