



DESIGN REVIEW BOARD RECORD OF DECISION

Meeting Date October 13, 2022 **DRB Case No.** PDR 2209552

Address 221 Thompson Avenue

Applicant Toros Balyan

Project Summary:

To construct a new two-story, 2,091 square-foot single-family residence on an 8,250 square-foot lot in the R1, FAR District II, H overlay zone. The existing 942 square-foot residence, built in 1938, will be demolished as a result of the project. The two buildings are the rear of the lot will remain.

Design Review:

Board Member	Motion	Second	Yes	No	Absent	Abstain
Lockareff			X			
Kaskanian			X			
Slmonian	X		X			
Tchaghayan		X	X			
Welch	X		X			
Totals			5	0		
DRB Decision		Return for Redesign				

Conditions:

1. Significant and holistic redesign of the project is warranted as the proposed residence is massive, does not transition well to adjacent properties, is incongruous with the surrounding neighborhood and is internally inconsistent. The applicant should reference the Single-Family Design Guidelines and shall redesign the project and incorporate the following suggested changes in combination or in their entirety to address the above-mentioned concerns and enable the project to comply with the Guidelines:
 - a. Revise site planning, referencing nearby single-family residences, to include varied setbacks created from room bump outs and covered porches.

- b. Reduce the size of the proposed residence or demolish all or part of the storage/guest house to allow improvement of the proportion, scale and massing of the proposed house.
 - c. Step portions of the second floor significantly back from the corresponding first-floor walls below, particularly at the front and side facades to provide greater articulation and reduce the mass of the second floor.
 - d. Provide a predominantly one-story element at the front façade to help achieve the goal of Condition 1c.
 - e. Reduce the floor-to-ceiling heights on both the first and second floors.
 - f. Redesign the front entry area to eliminate the monumental quality initially proposed.
 - g. Restudy the composition of the residence to provide both vertical and horizontal elements with the intent of reducing the mass/scale of the residence.
 - h. If the contemporary style is to be maintained, the new design must include elements that better relate to the surrounding context.
 - i. Vary the side yard setbacks.
 - j. Restudy the symmetrical nature of the design as it adds to the appearance of mass.
 - k. Restudy the various treatments and elements of the house, including the windows, to provide a hierarchy of architectural elements, which will help bring order to the overall design.
 - l. Incorporate pitched roofs to soften the massing and better relate to the surrounding neighborhood.
2. Additional conditions and items to consider/incorporate into any redesign include:
- a. Lower the height of the proposed residence, the project should be constructed at grade or as close to it as possible.
 - b. The design of the proposed residence should focus on the front and visible side elevations and not on matching it with the existing detached garage/ADU or storage/guest house structures.
 - c. Look to the neighborhood and photos provided by the applicant for character features that can be incorporated into the design of the proposed residence.
 - d. The driveway shall be reduced to 9 feet in width.
 - e. The chain link fence shall be removed. New fencing material and design shall be reviewed and approved by staff.
 - f. Window operation/style/ installation method shall be consistent with the chosen design of the house.
 - g. The rear balcony shall be eliminated or reduced in size to no more than 25 square feet.
 - h. Façade cladding shall be distributed among all building facades in a logical manner that relates to the building volumes that result from the incorporation of greater façade articulation (per Conditions 1a, c, d, and g).
 - i. All cladding materials must terminate appropriately and wrap all outside corners.
 - j. Additional façade treatment materials shall be incorporated into all building elevations.

Determination of Compatibility: Site Planning

The proposed site planning is **NOT** appropriate to the site and its surroundings and conditions are recommended for the redesign for the following reasons:

- The front façade of the proposed residence is basically “in line”, inconsistent with the façades and articulation of many of the single family residences on the street. The applicant should redesign the project to be more consistent with the neighborhood context.
- A new detached garage (with ADU above) was recently constructed at the rear of the property. This garage location is consistent with the majority of houses on the street.
- The existing chain link fence located on the subject property does not comply with the City’s Zoning Ordinance and needs to be removed. New proposed fencing material and design shall be reviewed and approved by staff.
- The retention of the guest house/storage building forces all new construction to be pushed toward the street, which is a problem given the size of the proposed house and the resultant massing.

Determination of Compatibility: Mass and Scale

The proposed massing and scale are **NOT** appropriate to the site and surroundings, and multiple conditions are recommended for the redesign of the project, for the following reasons:

- The proposed single-family residence does not provide an acceptable transition or fit with the adjacent single-family residences or the surrounding neighborhood, which consists of mostly modest single-family residences.
- The mass and scale of the residence is boxy and monumental and is more consistent with the large multi-family projects located on this block of Thompson Avenue.

Determination of Compatibility: Design and Detailing

The proposed design and detailing are **NOT** appropriate to the site and its surroundings, and conditions for the redesign of the project are recommended for the following reasons:

- The contemporary-designed residence is not internally consistent and does not appropriately transition to the adjacent homes or surrounding neighborhood.
- Bay windows are not appropriate for the contemporary design and placement of the windows on side and rear elevations are chaotic. Window hierarchy needs to be restudied.
- Placement of siding does not terminate appropriately and emphasizes verticality and mass.

DRB Staff Member Roger Kiesel, Senior Planner

Notes:

Contact the case planner for an appointment for a DRB stamp. DRB stamps will no longer be stamped over the counter without an appointment.

The Design Review Board approves the design of project 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 approved for Building Division plan check. Prior to Building Division plan check submittal, Design Review Board approved plans must be stamped approved by the Design Review staff.

Any changes to the approved plans may constitute returning to the Design Review Board for approval. Prior to Building 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.