

AGENDA**ITEM NO. 4.****DATE: February 14, 2023****PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF REPORT****SUBJECT****ADMINISTRATIVE USE PERMIT NO. 22-14****SUBCOMMITTEE DESIGN REVIEW NO. 22-124****CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION****APPLICANT:** K.C. Fong**LOCATION:** 345 S. Grand Avenue**REQUEST:** The applicant is requesting the approval of an Administrative Use Permit (AUP) to construct a new 3,000 square foot two-story single-family residence with an attached 400 square foot two-car garage on a 22,196 square foot vacant lot.**BACKGROUND**

The project site is a 22,196 square foot flag lot that is accessible via South Grand Avenue. The project site is adjacent to single-family residences to the north, south, east and west.

The table below summarizes the land-use for the project site and surrounding properties:

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
Zoning and General Plan	Zoning: Residential Single-Family (R-1) General Plan: Neighborhood - Low Density Residential (NL)
Surrounding Land Uses and Zoning	North: Residential Single-Family (R-1) East: Unincorporated Los Angeles County South: Residential Single-Family (R-1) West: Residential Single-Family (R-1)
Current Development	Vacant Residential Lot
Legal Notice	Notices of the Public Hearing have been mailed to all owners and occupants of properties located within 300 feet of the subject site.

All AUP applications require a public notice and a 10-day public review period to owners and occupants of properties located within a 300-foot radius of the project site. During the public review period, anyone may request a public hearing for the proposed project. If no requests are received, the project may be approved administratively by the Community Development Director.

During the public review period, planning staff received six (6) requests for a public hearing. Based on the requests received, planning staff forwarded the AUP to the Planning Commission. On December 5, 2022, planning staff received a comment from a neighbor whose primary concern was that the new proposed home would block their view, and would diminish their property value. On December 6, 2022, the same neighbor provided a follow-up letter requesting a hearing stating the size of the proposed home would not fit in with the neighborhood. Additionally, from December 7 to December 12, 2022, planning staff received four additional requests for a public hearing specifying privacy concerns.

In order to assist in addressing the concerns and allow the onsite visualization of the proposed home, the applicant proactively installed story poles onsite showing the total height of the proposed two-story

residence. The story poles were installed at various heights to show the overall building footprint, the highest point being set at 21 feet.

DISCUSSION

The proposal consists of a request to construct a new 3,000 square foot two-story single-family residence with an attached 400 square foot two-car garage. The proposed residence will consist of a great room, a library, a kitchen, four (4) bedrooms, three (3) bathrooms, one (1) powder room, a laundry room, and a loft. The residence will also have an open deck located on the second floor, accessible from a common area.

In order to address any privacy concerns, the project also includes the installation of vegetation and trees along all four property lines. The proposed residence would sit lower than the majority of the neighboring properties to the south, and will be generally at the same level as the properties to the north, west, and east. In addition, generous setbacks that exceed the code standards are provided.

The table below summarizes the development standards requirements in comparison to the proposed project:

	PROPOSED	DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS
HOUSE SIZE	3,000 SF	≤ 4,000 SF
LOT COVERAGE	0.19	≤ 0.35
FLOOR AREA RATIO	0.14	≤ 0.35
SETBACKS		
Front (South)	50 Feet	≥ 30 Feet
Side (West)	16 Feet, 8 Inches	≥ 10 Feet
Side (East)	30 Feet	≥ 10 Feet
Rear (North)	37 Feet	≥ 25 Feet
HEIGHT	21 Feet	≤ 25 Feet

The project plans also indicate the construction of a 700 square foot proposed accessory dwelling unit (ADU) to be located at the rear of the residence. Per State law, the ADU is required to be reviewed and approved administratively and is not within the Planning Commission's purview.

Design Review

The proposed house is designed utilizing a modern architectural style with a flat roof, large clear-tempered double pane windows, tempered glass railings, smooth-finished stucco and wood siding. The project was reviewed by the Subcommittee Design Review Board on November 22, 2022. At the meeting, the Subcommittee Design Review Board liked the modern design of the proposed house and recommended that the project move forward with the AUP noticing process.

Staff Survey of Surrounding Residences

The neighborhood surrounding the subject property consists of single-story and two-story houses that were constructed from 1947 to 2000. Planning staff conducted a survey of 30 homes surrounding the subject property. The houses in the survey are located on S Grand Avenue, E Sunset Hill Drive, E Jodee Drive, and E Acridge Drive. The following chart shows the mean and median lot size, square footage of the homes and the number of bedrooms. The mean is the average of all the homes surveyed, and the median is the number that falls directly in the middle of the listed in numerical order.

	LOT SIZE	FLOOR AREA	FLOOR AREA RATIO	NUMBER OF BEDROOMS
MEAN	17,680 SF	2,501 SF	0.15	3
MEDIAN	16,325 SF	2,332 SF	0.13	3
SUBJECT PROPERTY	22,196 SF	3,000 SF	0.14	4

The new house, as proposed, would be approximately 19% larger than the average-sized house within the surveyed area. However, the project site is also approximately 20% larger than the average lot size and would exhibit a lower floor area ratio (FAR) than the average lot in the area (0.15 FAR for the average and 0.14 FAR for the proposed). In addition, there are six (6) other homes in the immediate neighborhood that are larger than the proposed house. The largest house in the surveyed area is 4,040 square feet. Therefore, the size of the proposed house is reasonably consistent with the existing elements and character of the neighborhood.

REQUIRED FINDINGS

Prior to granting approval of an Administrative Use Permit, the following findings are required to be found:

a. That the lot and proposed development is consistent with the general plan, zoning, and meets all other applicable code requirements.

The proposed house is consistent with the Neighborhood Low (up to 8 dwelling units per acre) General Plan designation and the Residential Single-Family (R-1) Zone, in that it consists of the construction of one single-family residence on the lot. The project meets all applicable requirements of the Residential Single-Family (R-1) Zone and Area District III.

b. That the development utilizes building materials, color schemes and a roof style which blend with the existing structure, if any, and results in a development which is harmonious in scale and mass with the surrounding residences.

The neighborhood consists of a mixture of one-story and two-story homes and features a variety of architectural styles. The proposed two-story house features a modern architectural style with a flat roof, large clear-tempered double pane windows, smooth-finished stucco and wood siding.

c. That the development is sensitive and not detrimental to convenience and safety of circulation for pedestrians and vehicles.

The proposed house will be accessible from a driveway off of South Grand Avenue and will not negatively impact circulation or safety for pedestrians and vehicles. The subject property is within all setbacks as required by the Municipal Code. The proposed house does not have negative effects on the convenience and safety of circulation for pedestrians or vehicles in that it will not result in any visual obstructions adjacent to a right-of-the-way. The Fire Department and Engineering Division has worked with the applicant to ensure that there will not be any vehicle circulation safety issues.

d. That the development can be adequately served by existing or required infrastructure and services.

The lot is adequately served by existing infrastructure (streets, sewer, water, etc.). The proposed two-story house is not anticipated to require additional infrastructure or services beyond that provided for

the existing residences nearby. Therefore, the development can be adequately served by existing infrastructure and services.

e. That the design of the structure has given consideration to the privacy of surrounding properties through the usage and placement of windows and doors, cantilevers, decks, balconies, minimal retaining walls, trees and other buffering landscaping materials.

As conditioned, the windows on the second floor that face the single-story houses will not cause privacy impacts due to a combination of distance/setback, design, and landscape screening requirements.

f. That the development is sensitive to the natural terrain, minimizes necessary grading, de-emphasizes vertical massing which could disrupt the profile of a natural slope, and does not impede any scenic vistas or views open to the public or surrounding properties.

The proposal is sensitive to the natural terrain in that there are no major terrain modifications. Any necessary precise grading for construction will require that a grading permit be obtained from the Engineering Division. The project proposes a new two-story house that would not impede any scenic views from surrounding properties.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the proposed project is considered to be categorically exempt, pursuant to Section 15303 (Class 3, New Construction) in that it consists of construction of one single-family residence in a residential zone.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Planning Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. 23-6121 approving Administrative Use Permit No. 22-14 and Subcommittee Design Review No. 22-124.

LARGE ATTACHMENTS

Plans may be viewed at the West Covina City Hall Planning Division Counter at 1444 W. Garvey Avenue South, 2nd Floor - Room 208, West Covina, CA 91790.

Submitted by: Miriam Machado, Associate Planner

Attachments

Attachment No. 1 - Resolution of Approval

Attachment No. 2 - Hearing Request Letters