



Administrative Report

J.1., File # PC22-4183

Meeting Date: 5/19/2022

To: **PLANNING COMMISSION**

From: STACEY KINSELLA, ASSOCIATE PLANNER

TITLE

Public Hearing for consideration of an Exemption Declaration and Planning Commission Design Review to allow the construction of a new unenclosed balcony at a legal nonconforming property that is also a locally designated landmark located within a Commercial (C-2) zone at **415 S. Guadalupe Avenue** (CASE NO. PCDR-2022-01)

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Open Public Hearing and take testimony from staff, applicant, and other interested parties, and deliberate;
2. Close Public Hearing; and
3. Adopt a resolution by title only subject to the findings and conditions contained therein:

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF REDONDO BEACH, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING AN EXEMPTION DECLARATION AND PLANNING COMMISSION DESIGN REVIEW TO ALLOW THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW UNENCLOSED BALCONY ON A NONCONFORMING HISTORIC RESIDENCE LOCATED WITHIN A COMMERCIAL (C-2) ZONE AT **415 SOUTH GUADALUPE AVENUE**

BACKGROUND

The applicant is requesting that the Planning Commission approve a new 158 square foot unenclosed balcony along the north elevation of the locally designated historic home. The property is currently zoned C-2 Commercial; however, it was originally developed around 1923 (per Assessor) when residential construction was allowed at the site. The project includes new French doors, the removal of one window, and the removal of the existing eyebrow roof elements along the north elevation.

Per Municipal Code Section 10-2.2002(b), minor additions to a nonconforming use may be approved subject to Planning Commission Design review pursuant to the criteria listed within 10-2.2002(b) and the procedures/criteria outlined in Section 10-2.2502. While the designation of the building and the appropriateness of the changes to the historic building are within the purview of the Preservation Commission (Chapter 4, Title 10), the balcony addition itself requires Planning Commission approval. The Minor Alterations Subcommittee approved window revisions on January 25, 2022. The Preservation Commission reviewed and approved the Landmark Designation as well as the Certificate of Appropriateness application requesting the balcony, the French doors, the removal of

one window, and the removal of the small roof overhangs on March 2, 2022.

The property at 415 S. Guadalupe Avenue is located on the west side of South Guadalupe, east of Pacific Coast Highway. The property has an unusual trapezoidal shape with varying dimensions. The depth of the lot is an average of 54 feet and the width is an average of 55 feet. The property is approximately 2,830 square feet in size and the house has 1,397 square feet of floor area. The house is rectangular in shape and positioned adjacent to the south property line. This property slopes downward towards the west (rear) and appears one-story from the street view on South Guadalupe Avenue. The property is zoned C-2, Commercial and is considered legal nonconforming.

The City's Historic Resources Survey identifies the property as a Craftsman Bungalow built in 1934. The Assessor records note, however, that this building was constructed in 1923. The earliest documented permit on file is for a 1934 addition, indicating that there was an existing structure at that time. Moreover, the City directories show residents at the site in 1927. Therefore, the home was most likely built closer to 1923.

Early Sanborn maps show a detached garage to the north of the house, along the Guadalupe street frontage. Building records reference the garage in 1946, but a house-to-house inspection in 1977 only references the house. Thus, the garage was removed some time between 1946 and 1977. The property does not currently have any on-site parking.

The Minor Alterations Subcommittee approved window revisions on January 25, 2022. Those revisions included the removal of one window along the west elevation as well as reducing the height of two windows on the north elevation. These changes are in relationship to the interior remodel of the home and are considered as Phase One of the project. If the balcony addition does not obtain approval, the project would only include the interior remodel and the window revisions as approved in January (see attached Minor Alterations Subcommittee Elevation Drawings).

The Preservation Commission reviewed the request for Landmark Designation as well as the Certificate of Appropriateness for the new balcony, the French doors, the removal of one window, and the removal of the small roof overhangs on March 2, 2022. The work reviewed by the Preservation Commission is considered Phase Two of the project which focuses on the revisions needed to accommodate the new balcony. All of the proposed work for this second phase is on the north elevation. As it relates to the designation of the property, the house is approximately 99 years old and exhibits many of the classic California Bungalow architectural features. California Bungalow architecture is essentially Craftsman in design, but on a much smaller scale. Craftsman is the most prevalent style of historic architecture in the City and the integrity of the subject building, including the exterior materials, is still intact.

PROPOSED PROJECT

The project includes a 158-square foot balcony addition along the north elevation. The project would

also include the removal of one window, the removal of two eyebrow roof overhangs on the lowest level, and the addition of French doors that would lead to the new balcony. The balcony would be 5 feet, 10 inches in depth and span 27 feet across the northern side of the home. The balcony would be constructed of wood, have 42-inch high wood railings, and be painted to match the existing trim around the home. One original doublehung window would be removed in order to install wood French Doors for access to the balcony. Two existing eyebrow roof overhangs on the lower floor would be removed as they would interfere with the construction of the balcony.

Because this lot is downsloping towards Pacific Coast Highway, the home appears to be one-story from the front street view along Guadalupe Avenue. There is an existing front yard wood fence approximately 36 inches in height and there is a retaining wall approximately 7 feet in height below that fence. The retaining wall protects the lower yard area to the west, which is accessible via concrete steps on the right-hand side of the entry porch. Due to this existing topography and the front yard fencing, only the top eight (8) inches of the proposed balcony would be visible from the street (see Sheet A-3 of the attached drawings).

ANALYSIS OF REQUEST

Nonconforming Uses

Per Municipal Code Section 10-2.2002(b), minor additions to nonconforming uses require Planning Commission Design Review (subject to Section 10-2.2502) and must meet the following criteria:

- 1) The alteration or addition shall not adversely impact surrounding property.

The balcony is proposed along the north elevation which currently has a 19-foot, 2-inch setback between the building and the northern property line (see Sheet A-1 of the attached drawings). The proposed balcony would be over 13 feet from the northern property line and four (4) feet to the western rear property line. The property to the north at 422 S. Pacific Coast Highway is also zoned C-2 Commercial and is currently vacant. The proposed commercial development will be a two-story building immediately adjacent to the shared property line between 422 and the subject property. Per 10-2.622, a new commercial development on an interior lot within the C-2 Zone is not required to have a side setback. Thus, the proposed balcony would be facing a new two-story commercial building. The property to the west at 424 S. Pacific Coast Highway is topographically below this site and has a commercial storefront facing PCH with a residential unit behind it. The yard area for the residential unit appears to be located on the south side of the building. The proposed balcony would most likely not be visible from this existing yard area. There also appears to be mature vegetation along the shared property line between 424 and the subject site. The balcony would not be visible to the property to the south at 419 S. Guadalupe Avenue.

Please note that this property and the immediately adjacent properties are zoned C-2 Commercial, but the remaining properties to the north and to the east are zoned R-1 Single Family Residential. Thus, the majority of the properties facing South Guadalupe Avenue are single family homes.

- 2) The alteration or addition shall not increase the degree of nonconformity with respect to the standards of property development for the zone in which the property is located, including, but not limited to, density, building height, floor area ratio, and setback requirements.

The proposed balcony would not increase the existing building envelope, would not change the density on this lot, and would not change the building height. The setbacks for this zone are 5 feet along the front and zero setbacks for the side and rear yards. Thus, the proposed balcony would not interfere with the required setbacks for this zone.

- 3) The alteration or addition shall not decrease the future capability of the structure to provide off-street parking at a ratio that could reasonably allow replacement by a conforming use.

The property does not currently have on-site parking; however, the proposed balcony would not alter the site's ability to accommodate parking.

- 4) The alteration or addition shall not cause or increase a deficiency in the number of parking spaces required for the existing use.

The property does not currently have on-site parking; however, the proposed balcony would not increase the degree of that specific non-conformity.

- 5) That if the structure containing the nonconforming use is nonconforming with respect to the standards of property development for the zone in which the property is located, including, but not limited to, density, building height, floor area ratio, or provision of off-street parking, the alteration or addition shall not substantially increase the useful life of the nonconforming structure.

The life of the nonconforming structure was substantially extended due to the local Landmark Designation approved by the Preservation Commission on March 2, 2022. The proposed balcony would not affect this designation, but it would create more outdoor living space for the owners. The lower yard area is approximately 734 square feet in size and with the 158-square foot balcony, the property would have approximately 892 square feet. If this property were zoned R-1, it would be required to have 800 square feet of private outdoor living space. It is also worth noting that the property conforms to most of the development standards for the C-2 Zone except parking.

- 6) The alteration or addition is not inconsistent with the General Plan.

This project meets Goal 1.0 of the Housing Element (2013-2021) to "[m]aintain and enhance the existing viable housing stock and neighborhoods within Redondo Beach." This also includes Policy 1.3 which states, in part, that the City is to "encourage the maintenance and repair of the City's historical structures."

Planning Commission Design Review

Per Municipal Code Section 10-2.2502, the purpose of Planning Commission Design Review is to “ensure compatibility, originality, variety, and innovation in the architecture, design, landscaping, and site planning of developments in the community.” Projects subject to Planning Commission Design review must meet the following criteria:

- 1) User impact and needs.** The design of the project shall consider the impact and the needs of the user in respect to circulation, parking, traffic, utilities, public services, noise and odor, privacy, private and common open spaces, trash collection, security and crime deterrence, energy consumption, physical barriers, and other design concerns.

The proposed balcony addition would improve the use of the historic home by providing 158 square feet of additional outdoor living space. The balcony would face a new two-story commercial building to the north at 422 S. Pacific Coast Highway and would also face the back of the existing mixed-use property to the west at 424 S. Pacific Coast Highway. Due to topography and mature vegetation, there most likely would not be privacy impacts to the property to the west (424). The new two-story commercial building at 422 would be taller and more dominant than the subject site. The proposed balcony would provide more eyes on the street with side views of Guadalupe Avenue. This may increase neighborhood security. The balcony would not impact the existing internal circulation, parking, or other design concerns.

- 2) Relationship to physical features.** The location of buildings and structures shall respect the natural terrain of the site and shall be functionally integrated with any natural features of the landscape to include the preservation of existing trees, where feasible.

There would be no changes to the existing terrain or landscaping.

- 3) Consistency of architectural style.** The building or structure shall be harmonious and consistent within the proposed architectural style regarding roofing, materials, windows, doors, openings, textures, colors, and exterior treatment.

The proposed balcony would be compatible in style and materials to the existing California Bungalow residence. The balcony would be comprised of wood and be painted to match the existing trim on the home.

- 4) Balance and integration with the neighborhood.** The overall design shall be integrated and compatible with the neighborhood and shall strive to be in harmony with the scale and bulk of surrounding properties.

The subject property would remain one-story as viewed from the street frontage. The proposed wood balcony would have a low profile with only eight (8) inches visible above

the existing front yard fence. The majority of the homes along the western side of South Guadalupe Avenue were built in the early 1900s and have a similar one-story scale as the subject site. The character of the neighborhood would remain unchanged.

- 5) Building Design.** The design of buildings and structures shall strive to provide innovation, variety, and creativity in the proposed design solution. All architectural elevations shall be designed to eliminate the appearance of flat façades or boxlike construction: a) The front façade shall have vertical and horizontal offsets to add architectural interest to the exterior of the building and where possible, bay windows and similar architectural projections shall be used; b) The roof planes of the building, as well as the building shape, shall be varied where feasible, and a visible and significant roof line shall be used to soften the vertical mass; c) Harmonious variations in the treatment or use of wall materials shall be integrated into the architectural design.

The design of the existing California Bungalow home would remain unchanged, but does include four-sided architecture with distinctive features such as siding, trim, gable roof elements, and an entry porch. The proposed balcony would be compatible in scale and materials (wood) as the existing residence.

- 6) Signs.** Signs and sign programs shall meet the criteria established in Sign Regulation Criteria, Section 10-2.1802.

No signage is proposed as part of this project.

- 7) Consistency with residential design guidelines.** The project shall be consistent with the intent of residential design guidelines adopted by resolution of the City Council.

The proposed balcony would be in keeping with the scale, mass, and character of the existing home as well as the surrounding neighborhood, particularly the older homes on the west side of South Guadalupe Avenue. The building height, floor area, and existing California Bungalow architectural features would remain unchanged.

- 8) Conditions of approval.** The conditions stated in the resolution or design considerations integrated into the project shall be deemed necessary to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare (see 10-2.2502(b)(8) items a-k for possible conditions).

The attached draft Resolution includes standard project conditions specifically outlined to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare of the subject site and surrounding properties. As a locally designated landmark, the project is also subject to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (SISR) of historic structures. The draft Resolution from the Preservation Commission review, which references the SISR key elements, is included in the March agenda packet (see link under the Attachments).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The proposed balcony addition along the north elevation of the historic residence at 415 S. Guadalupe Avenue would be compatible in scale, mass, and style with the existing home as well as the surrounding neighborhood. The balcony would have minimal visibility from the street and would not increase the degree of nonconformity in relationship to floor area, building height, setbacks, and parking. The life of the nonconforming structure has already been extended due to the approval of the Landmark Designation by the Preservation Commission on March 2, 2022. The approval of the unenclosed balcony would not affect this designation, but it would provide 158 square feet of additional outdoor living space for a residence that will remain at the site for years to come.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

The proposed project is Categorically Exempt from the preparation of environmental documents pursuant to Section 15301 and 15331 of the Guidelines to Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

COORDINATION

The proposed project has been coordinated with the City's Building Department and City Clerk's Office.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

ATTACHMENTS

Exemption Declaration

Draft Resolution

Planning Commission Design Review Application

Proposed Drawings

Minor Alterations Subcommittee - Approval Letter

Minor Alterations Subcommittee - Elevation Drawings

Preservation Commission March 2, 2022 Agenda Materials:

<https://redondo.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5465706&GUID=9AA15D76-D363-4B3E-A27A-0B5FE0C31414&Options=&Search=>

Preservation Commission March 2, 2022 Minutes