



City of Burlingame

BURLINGAME CITY HALL
501 PRIMROSE ROAD
BURLINGAME, CA 94010

Meeting Minutes Planning Commission

Monday, February 10, 2020

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Staff in attendance: Planning Manager Ruben Hurin, Senior Planner Erika Lewit, and City Attorney Kathleen Kane.

2. ROLL CALL

Present 6 - Sargent, Comaroto, Terrones, Tse, Gaul, and Loftis

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Draft December 9, 2019 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [Draft December 9, 2019 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes](#)

- b. Draft January 13, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [Draft January 13, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Terrones, seconded by Commissioner Sargent, to approve the minutes with amendments submitted to staff earlier. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Sargent, Comaroto, Terrones, Tse, Gaul, and Loftis

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS, NON-AGENDA

There were no public comments.

6. STUDY ITEMS

There were no Study Items.

7. CONSENT CALENDAR

- a. Amendments to 2020 Planning Commission Calendar – Staff Contact: Ruben Hurin

Attachments: [2020 Planning Commission Calendar Memorandum - Amendment](#)
[Draft Amended 2020 Planning Commission Schedule](#)

- b. 2300 Davis Drive, zoned R-1 - Application for One Year Extension of a previously approved Hillside Area Construction Permit for a first floor addition to an existing single family dwelling. This project is Categorically Exempt from review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per section 15301(e)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines. (Jun Chen, applicant and property owner; SC Design Group, designer) (78 noticed) Staff Contact: 'Amelia Kolokihakaufisi

Attachments: [2300 Davis Dr - Staff Report](#)

[2300 Davis Dr - Attachments](#)

[2300 Davis Dr - Plans](#)

Commissioner Terrones made a motion, seconded by Chair Comaroto, to approve the Consent Calendar. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Sargent, Comaroto, Terrones, Tse, Gaul, and Loftis

8. REGULAR ACTION ITEMS

- a. 859 Cowan Road, zoned IB - Application for a Conditional Use Permit and Parking Variance for a church use in an existing building. This project is Categorically Exempt from review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per section 15301(a) of the CEQA Guidelines. (Andrew Chiu, applicant; The Church of Burlingame, property owner; David Fung AIA, architect) (39 noticed) Staff Contact: Catherine Keylon

Attachments: [859 Cowan Rd - Staff Report](#)

[859 Cowan Rd - Attachments](#)

[859 Cowan Rd - Plans](#)

All Commissioners had visited the project site. There were no ex-parte communications to report.

Planning Manager Hurin provided an overview of the staff report.

Questions of staff:

> *Is there a requirement for landscaping in front of the building? (Hurin: There is when a new building is being constructed or if there's a significant addition to a building, but we wouldn't apply it in this case where they're just intensifying the uses within the building.)*

> *What is the required size for compact parking space versus a full-size parking space? (Hurin: A compact is 8' x 17' and a standard space allowed for commercial and industrial uses is 8.5' x 18').*

> *So the parking variance seems approvable because the existing use is compatible with the church use and they're occurring at different times. What if their profile of use changes? What happens if the church ceases to exist or if the building is sold? (Hurin: The variance would apply to the uses that are being proposed with this application. For example in the future, if this particular group goes away and another church use comes in, and they follow the conditions of approval, the same square footages and uses, they can take over. A variance cannot be used to allow a different type of use. If a different use comes in and they will need a parking variance, we would bring that before you for consideration.)*

> *Is the variance for an assembly use restricted to Sundays or would the variance allow a different time or day? (Kane: I don't currently see a condition about hours of operation, so that's something the Commission may want to add. The other amendment I would make to the conditions is to call it an assembly use rather than a church specifically because we don't want to get too fine of a point as to what kind of religious activity is allowed.)*

> So it would be within our purview to have a condition of approval that would only allow the variance from, say between 8:00 am to 12:00 pm on Sunday? (Kane: Yes, or weekends if we're trying to offset with office use. But we would allow for more definitions of Sabbath later.)

> The assembly use in this district is based on a conditional use permit. Does that conditional use permit have time constraints or is it more general than that? (Hurin: I think it's more general than that.)

Chair Comaroto opened the public hearing.

Steve Fung and Andrew Chiu, represented the applicant.

Commission Questions/Comments:

> Was at the site and struggling to understand how you're going to fit 31 proposed parking spaces on the site. Looks like you're at the maximum right now and the parking spaces are 8 feet or under in width. (Fung: Went to the site and field measured the spaces. Plans show how the parking spaces would be re-stripped on the lot.)

> Point is that you're going to need to move the trash area over to the side to get parking space #19 in. Can make the first 18 spaces fit, but think you're going to end up one parking space short. Also concerned about parking spaces #30 and #31. Measured each one of those, from the face of the ADA ramp to the edge of the building and came up with 13'-3" in length. (Fung: These parking spaces extend past the corner of the building, into the common driveway between the two buildings. The church is not just limited to their side. In good faith, it would be compact. It's a little shorter, but it does extend out past the building face on that end.) I don't know exactly where that property line is or where that space would start, but I don't see how you're going to get two spaces in there.

> Don't see how you're going to come up with 31 parking spaces. (Fung: You may be correct and we'll be short, potentially maybe another three spaces. The church will offer valet parking on weekends when they hold their services. Although we can't count the spaces at 1818 Gilbreth Road because of their own variance for on site parking, the church has an agreement to use those spaces as valet parking. But if it's a concern that we can't get all the spaces, we can amend our application and offer three more additional valet parking.)

> You have three services on Sunday morning and they seem to be 45 minutes a part. How long do the services last? My concern is that if the services are not spaced further part, then people are going to be coming and going at the same time, and that's where we're going to get the maximum amount of cars on the site at one time. (Chiu: These are smaller groups like bible studies. Generally about 45 minutes long.) (Fung: As part of this application, the Church of Burlingame submitted a roster of the number of persons who come to these meetings. Even if they overstay the time from the first meeting, or come early for the second meeting, the on-site parking plus the valet parking that can be offered would accommodate that number of attendees.)

Public Comments:

> There were no public comments.

Chair Comaroto closed the public hearing.

Commission Discussion/Direction:

> Generally in favor of the concept. The variance, if worded correctly, is supportable because it is a compatible use but needs another condition of approval. Would propose at this time that it be limited to weekends. If the applicant wants to go further than weekends, should let them come back with a written proposal as far as what holidays they would want. Citing all legal holidays would be too broad. We need to hear from the applicant if they want anything more than what's proposed.

> Kane: Given that most businesses take Christmas day off, and we know this is a religious use, you may want to add that as a singular possibility, weekends and Christmas Day.

- > *Uncomfortable with the proposed parking plan based on my measurements in the field today. Concerned with parking spaces #30 and #31 extending out into the shared driveway.*
- > *Am accepting of the conditional use permit and the variance with the revision to the conditions in regards to when the assembly activities could occur. Requests to revise the condition to state that the congregation or assembly uses would be on weekends, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day, only because the applicant in their statements said Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.*
- > *In regards to the parking, perhaps a condition can be added that the architect revisits the layout and come back with an FYI. If that rises to the level of requiring an amendment that's determined by staff, they can bring this back to the Commission for a new action.*

Commissioner Terrones made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sargent, to approve the application with the following amended and added conditions:

- > that the assembly use at 859 Cowan Road shall be limited to a total of 1,320 SF of assembly area with 382 SF on the first floor (meeting room) and 938 SF on the third floor (meeting room) as shown on the plans submitted to the Planning Division and date stamped January 27, 2020.
- > that the assembly uses in the approved first and third floor areas at 859 Cowan Road shall be limited to weekends, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day; and that any changes to the approved days for assembly shall require an amendment to this Conditional Use Permit.
- > that any expansion of the assembly use beyond 1,320 SF within the building at 859 Cowan Road, as shown on the plans submitted to the Planning Division and date stamped January 27, 2020, shall require that the applicant first apply for an amendment to the existing Conditional Use Permit.
- > that the on-site parking spaces as shown on the plans date stamped January 27, 2020 shall be utilized to meet the parking demand of the assembly use prior to utilizing on-street parking; sheet A-1 on the plans date stamped January 27, 2020, notes that 10 additional parking spaces may be provided off-site on a separate nearby property, however this agreement is not recognized by the City of Burlingame and these 10 spaces are not counted toward meeting the parking requirement.
- > that the property owner shall be responsible for scheduling an inspection with the Planning Division when the parking lot is re-striped (no later than three months past the approval date, or by May 20, 2020); that the Planning Division shall inspect the parking spaces shown on the plans date stamped January 27, 2020 for compliance and that any changes to the approved number of viable spaces shall be documented by the Planning Division.
- > that the Conditional Use Permit and the Parking Variance approval, based on the Conditional Use Permit limitations, shall apply only to an assembly use and shall become void if the assembly use is replaced by a permitted use, or if the building is ever demolished or destroyed by catastrophe or natural disaster or for replacement.
- > that all activities associated with the assembly use shall occur indoors only and that no portion of the on-site parking areas shall be used for activities other than parking.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Sargent, Comaroto, Terrones, Tse, Gaul, and Loftis

9. DESIGN REVIEW STUDY

- a. 212 Bloomfield Road, zoned R-1 - Application for Design Review for a new, two-story

single family dwelling and detached garage. (James Chu, designer and applicant; Bob Gilson, property owner) (133 noticed) Staff Contact: Catherine Keylon

Attachments: [212 Bloomfield Rd - Staff Report](#)

[212 Bloomfield Rd - Attachments](#)

[212 Bloomfield Rd - Plans](#)

All Commissioners had visited the project site. There were no ex-parte communications to report.

Senior Planner Lewit provided an overview of the staff report.

Questions of staff:

> *There were no questions of staff.*

Chair Comaroto opened the public hearing.

James Chu and Bob Gilson represented the applicant.

Commission Questions/Comments:

> *What is the first floor plate height? (Chu: 9'- 6".)*

> *Are you replacing the fence all around the property? (Chu: Yes.) Have you spoken with the right side neighbor regarding the details for the fence, such as how the fence will be built at the detached garage? (Chu: Not yet.) Do you think you'll be able to do that before this comes back for action so you know if they have issues with the fence coming down? (Gilson: Yes.)*

> *There is a planter box outside the kitchen located below the double casement window. Concerned that the plants may not grow well with the opening of a casement window. May want to consider a different window operation or lowering the planter box. (Chu: We will look into, perhaps not have any plants.)*

Public Comments:

> *David Harris, 600 Howard Avenue: Ordinance 1591 states that the design review criteria should include compatibility of the architectural style with that of the existing character of the neighborhood. This has come up before the Commission in a number of previous occasions, a lot of the homes in the area on Bloomfield Road, Howard Avenue, Burlingame Avenue, and on the joining blocks have this spanish mediterranean style. This looks like a great house and they've done a magnificent job, however it doesn't look like it fits with anything else that's in the neighborhood, even the non mediterranean style houses. It's a lost opportunity to enhance the character of the neighborhood. Also concerned that every new house seems to be built to the maximum footprint, and so what we're seeing is all of these very large houses that stand in contrast to the existing housing stock. Over time, we're losing the character of the neighborhood. That's not something that I think you can fix with one house or two houses, but wish the Commission would keep this in mind as you review houses that come before you in this neighborhood which really has a distinctive character. Have lived there for 20 years and that's what I value about the homes. Question whether the proposed house really fits with the neighborhood.*

Chair Comaroto closed the public hearing.

Commission Discussion/Direction:

> *The project is fairly straight forward. The house is very well crafted, very well designed, but it is very large. We don't have anything that specifically says we can't have large houses. So the nexus between size and our purview comes to our interpretations of the design review criteria. Think some articulation can help, even with the current character and the current design.*

- > Don't see a correlation with the porch height, bringing down the height of the porch would help bring down the massiveness. It would also help, from a pedestrian standpoint and from a visitor standpoint, stepping onto the stoop and onto a lower porch than a grand, 9'-6" tall beam that's overhead.
- > There is a consistent 8'-1" plate all the way around on the second floor and the only thing that breaks that height is nothing that comes below that height. The only thing that extends up above that height are the two gables on the front side and the larger gables on the side elevations, and the 30'-6" long gables on the side elevations are large. Long gables work on a side elevation when that broad gable is springing from a 4'-0" plate height like a craftsmanship or a Burlingame bungalow. This is a second floor gable that is broad and consistent all the way around that height.
- > Am a bit compelled by the point that we have somewhat of an enclave of spanish houses. We don't have historic districts, so I don't think I would say this should be or ought to be a spanish revival house. However, with a spanish style house, you have small saddle bags, styled awnings, small windows, balconies and other bits of architecture that can help articulate the massing a little bit more if you indeed want to build a large house. So there might be some consideration of that design. I think it's a point well made that that could help with the articulation with this massing.
- > Having difficulty making the findings for design review in terms of compatibility of architecture because of the mass of the house.

Commissioner Sargent made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Loftis, to place the item on the Regular Action Calendar when plans have been revised as directed.

Comment on motion:

- > This area does have a lot of beautiful spanish style homes. Appreciate situations when homes are replaced with the same style to keep the consistency in the neighborhood.
- > Think proposed house is too large. Not opposed to the total square footage, but the height feels a little bit overbearing.
- > Like the design and think it fits in well especially because it's replacing a similar style house. The house doesn't fit with everything else, but one of the things that's compelling about this design is that the front porch is applied to the front of the house. It's not your typical front porch. It does go across the whole front, and it projects out as well. Think it's a Burlingame-style house, just a larger version, and really don't have any objection to it at all. Applicant is using lot of square footage for the front porch, but I think it's a good use of it. It softens the front of the house. The house on the left is quite large and doesn't fall within declining height envelope, so it seems like this is the one opportunity you have to do a house that doesn't have to conform to the declining height.
- > The issue is less about the style but rather the size of the house, feels massive in the way it's articulated. There are opportunities to make it appear to be a much smaller house.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Sargent, Comaroto, Terrones, Tse, Gaul, and Loftis

- b.** 1445 Balboa Avenue, zoned R-1 - Application for Design Review for a new, two-story single family dwelling and detached garage. (James Chu, Chu Design Associates, applicant and designer; Angelo & Carrie Cosentino, property owners) (137 noticed) Staff Contact: Michelle Markiewicz

Attachments: [1445 Balboa Ave - Staff Report](#)
[1445 Balboa Ave - Attachments](#)
[1445 Balboa Ave - Plans](#)

All Commissioners had visited the project site. There were no ex-parte communications to report.

Senior Planner Lewit provided an overview of the staff report.

Questions of staff:

- > There were no questions of staff.

Chair Comaroto opened the public hearing.

James Chu, represented the applicant.

Commission Questions/Comments:

- > There are some corbels or knee braces shown on the building elevations, but they don't follow through on other elevations. (Chu: Will correct on plans.)
- > What is the reasoning for the two dormers at the left elevation? They're fairly high up above those two smaller windows. They don't seem to relate much to the windows. (Chu: We can lower it.)
- > On the right elevation, the planter wall is wrapping the bottom of the tall wood column at the corner of the porch. Like what it's doing in terms of reducing the height of the column. Is there any reason why it does not continue across? Would that still work if the column sat on the planter wall? (Chu: We can look into it.)
- > Can you consider lowering the porch roof height to a lower plate height so that you don't have a kinked flat porch that is going to be difficult to waterproof. (Chu: We can look into it.)
- > The deck itself is only about 56 square feet, is that correct? (Chu: It's under 80 square feet.)
- > On the deck, rather than raising the height of the guardrail and making it solid, could you consider moving the rail in a couple of feet? That would give you an opportunity to have some kind of planting area to gain privacy. Maybe put something in boxes or planters to create a small hedge. (Chu: We can look into it.)

Public Comments:

- > Teresa Hei, 1441 Balboa Avenue: Am opposed to the balcony, these lots are quite small, and although the balcony may not face my side of the house, I do think it would infringe on my privacy. We have a hot tub in the backyard and I don't think any amount of plantings would hide that or would prevent somebody from looking over. The argument that privacy is a two-way street only works if we all, on both sides, had balconies also, and we don't. The second floor balcony would look into both neighbors. When we proposed a second floor balcony, we were told we couldn't do it, had to enclose it, and put small 2-by-2 windows high up above eye level, so that we could protect our neighbor's privacy. Don't think you should be able to put in a second floor balcony that can look into your neighbor's yard. I hope that you take that into consideration.

- > Marria Nazif, 1449 Balboa Avenue: Found in the design guidelines that decks and patios should be kept as close to the ground as possible to avoid overlooking neighbors. Wonder if it wouldn't be possible to make the outdoor space fully enclosed or keep it to the backyard as we do value our privacy. Am concerned about the stairway window because we also have a larger window in the same part of our house, so I want to make sure some care is taken to determine whether or not these windows are opposite of each other.

Chair Comaroto closed the public hearing.

Commission Discussion/Direction:

- > Concerned about the second floor deck. There should be some reconsideration for the second floor balcony. The architecture can still work even if the deck wasn't there at all. Have been permissive of second floor decks because those houses, in particular, are pushed well back on to the property and have

limited yard space. This project doesn't have that situation, it's going to be fully developed with a nicely landscaped yard and patio space. Other than that, the project should move forward.

> Regarding the four windows, would ask the applicant to meet with the neighbors and to review where those windows align with the neighbor's windows. Have seen some good solutions for these large stairwell window so that they are less intrusive to the neighbors on smaller lots.

> Appears that there are a lot of opportunities for some great yard space, nicely developed patios and landscaped areas. Although it would be nice to have a master balcony or porch, it's not being appropriate at least in that size and location. Could consider remassing the master suite, such that it becomes more of an internal u-shaped master suite with a central balcony that doesn't protrude out and overlooks a neighboring property, but rather into your own backyard. Would like to see the balcony concern addressed in light of the number of one-story homes in the neighborhood and along that street.

> In regards to the fencing, would ask the building to coordinate with the neighbors and identify any issues with existing fences being replaced with new fences.

Commissioner Terrones made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sargent, to place the item on the Regular Action Calendar when plans have been revised as directed. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Sargent, Comaroto, Terrones, Tse, Gaul, and Loftis

10. COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS

There were no Commissioner's Reports.

11. DIRECTOR REPORTS

> Planning Manager Hurin noted that Planning Commissioner interviews will be held on February 20, 2020. The application period closed on January 31, 2020 and one application was submitted.

> Amendments to the Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance to be consistent with recently adoption of State law has been scheduled for Planning Commission review on February 24, 2020.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Note: An action by the Planning Commission is appealable to the City Council within 10 days of the Planning Commission's action on February 10, 2020. If the Planning Commission's action has not been appealed or called up for review by the Council by 5:00 p.m. on February 20, 2020, the action becomes final. In order to be effective, appeals must be in writing to the City Clerk and must be accompanied by an appeal fee of \$1,045.00, which includes noticing costs.

Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the Planning Commission regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection during normal business hours at the Community Development/Planning counter, City Hall, 501 Primrose Road, Burlingame, California.