



City of Burlingame

BURLINGAME CITY HALL
501 PRIMROSE ROAD
BURLINGAME, CA 94010

Meeting Minutes Planning Commission

Monday, March 22, 2021

7:00 PM

Online

- a. 1110 Bernal Avenue and 1112 Bernal Avenue, zoned R-1 - Application for Design Review for two, new single family dwellings with detached garages, Conditional Use Permit for re-emerging lots, and Lot Combination and Tentative Parcel Map. (Tim Raduenz, Designer, Form + One Design; 1110 Bernal, LLC, property owner) (117 noticed) Staff Contact: Erika Lewit

All Commissioners have 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:

> *Clarification in regards to the Redwood tree in the back left corner of the lot that is going to be removed on what will become the 1110 Bernal Avenue address lot. It seems like that Redwood tree has nothing to do with this project. However the staff report states "until staff and Planning Commission can evaluate the removal of the Redwood tree, it cannot be determined if landscape replacement trees are required or proposed." What purview do we have over the removal of that Redwood tree if it's not in the footprint of the new garage or house? (Hurin: It's an existing Redwood tree that's at the back of the lot on the right side which is 1110 Bernal Avenue. They have submitted for a Tree Removal Permit, but a certified arborist report hasn't been submitted yet. Once we receive the report, the City Arborist will then review the findings or recommendations in the report and make a determination as to whether or not that tree can be removed. If it can be removed, then there may be additional landscape trees that would be required to be planted. It's not necessarily under the purview of the Planning Commission. Only in that if there are new landscape trees required, it can be a part of the new landscape plan you'll be reviewing.) So, the City Arborist isn't waiting for us to opine on the project to determine if the tree can be removed, but whether new landscape is required if he grants approval of the report? (Hurin: That's correct. Before this comes back to you for action, we want to make sure the arborist report is received and the City Arborist reviewed that report. If any additional landscape trees are required, they'll be factored into the landscape plan.)*

> *The proposed house at 1110 Bernal Avenue has what seems to me five bedrooms, however the staff report says it has four bedrooms, can you also clarify that? (Hurin: I think it's the other way around. 1110 Bernal Avenue has four bedrooms and 1112 Bernal Avenue has five bedrooms.) That's what it says in the staff report, but I counted five bedrooms at 1110 Bernal Avenue. (Hurin: I can take a look at the floor plans to confirm the number of bedrooms.) Thank you. Just a minor clarification, but it affects the garage.*

Chair Tse opened the public hearing.

Tim Raduenz, Form + One Design, represented the applicant with the property owner Patrick Gilson.

Commission Questions/Comments:

- > *(Gilson: An arborist report was submitted to the City on March 18th. It details the health and safety of the tree.)*
- > *What's the thinking behind breaking the driveway pattern of the street? I didn't noticed it at the time,*

but 1112 Bernal Avenue would be the only driveway on the block that is on the left side of the house facing the house. What's the thinking there? (Gilson: The thinking on my end was to give space between 1116 Bernal Avenue and this development. There's space for planting mature trees, but given the fact they have been there for that long, I felt like they deserved that. To have these two homes play with each other as far as the landscape design and just to separate what's existing and what's being proposed.) (Raduenz: We created the Dutch Colonial style to have these kind of little secret gardens and I think that works well. That would be why we did the north side driveway.)

> (Raduenz: Both homes have five bedrooms.) Thank you. I definitely counted five bedrooms.

> In bathroom #4 at 1110 Bernal Avenue, you have the wall of the bathroom intersecting the middle window facing the street. It looks like you're trying to tie the wall into the mullion. (Raduenz: It's a big mullion. Correct.) Is that the plan, as opposed to modifying the floor plan? I'm afraid you couldn't see it from the street. (Raduenz: I can take a look at it.)

> Looking at the height of the window proposed for bathroom #1 against the vanity, it looks like you don't have any space to put a mirror above the vanity. I don't know if you wanted to take a look at that again. (Raduenz: I will.)

> For 1112 Bernal Avenue, there's a clipped window at the master bathroom on the side elevation. If you can look at that more closely, it's on sheet A.3.1. It's something I'm sure you can adjust, raise the sill or something. It's looking like it's intersecting with the roof. (Raduenz: We could, instead of doing a 4'-6" window, we can do a 4' window and give us more breathing room.) Yes, maybe match the window to the right of the chimney.

> On the rear elevation, the windows up above look heavy over the windows below on the left side of the rear elevation. I'm not sure if that's the master bedroom on the second floor? (Raduenz: That's the master bedroom, correct.) It seems to have some heaviness there. I don't know if you can balance out the window shapes or sizes. The upper floor looks taller than the lower floor. This is more a comment than a question, but I wanted to note that for consideration. (Raduenz: We'll look into it. It does have a vaulted ceiling, so we're trying to create open space up there, but we can look into what we can do to lighten the design a little bit. I kind of understand what you're saying.)

> In looking at the materials for 1112 Bernal Avenue, my understanding that the Windsor One siding has both a smooth side and textured side. Is the horizontal siding going to be smooth or textured? (Raduenz: We are thinking it's going to be textured.) Does that require a corner board or can it be mitered? (Raduenz: We're designing it to be mitered and we are going to hopefully stay with that. We can confirm that before the next meeting. In my past projects, I don't like doing corner boards. That's what we're trying to do, we're doing a mitered corner.) Please verify if mitering is possible with that particular material or not before this project comes back. (Raduenz: It's mitered.)

Public Comments:

> Comment sent via e-mail and chat from Gail Mosse: Could a tree screen be maintained between the new house on the right and the immediate house to the right on the corner of Bernal Avenue and Carmelita Avenue? We heard a tree screen was included to the north side of the left house as a courtesy to the neighbors, and they have resided there for 60 years, but it seems that courtesy should be extended to the northern neighbors too even though they just moved in. Arguably, it's more justified because the houses are closer together. (Raduenz: If you can send me the e-mail, I'll correspond with the neighbor, but we will definitely have some tree screening there. We will respond to the neighbor and make sure that they are happy.)

Chair Tse closed the public hearing.

Commission Discussion/Direction:

> On 1112 Bernal Avenue, it feels like the front elevation is pretty flat given the materials; it seems monochromatic as far as the upper and lower floors are concerned. There is not a lot of definition to it. I saw a few modern farmhouses, there were a few with some material pop outs and changes, not just all white. There were also a couple that were all white and they looked flat too. But there's an opportunity to

pop out that upper window with a little material change going to something that actually is darker and giving it some contrast. The 1110 Bernal Avenue has so much more character to it. This one is coming off as modern flat. I would like to see a little more to go with that. Looking at the rear elevation, I agree with the canopy and the big windows. It really looks like it's bottom heavy and out of proportion.

> I generally like the buildings a lot. My fellow Commissioner is right, there's an opportunity on 1112 Bernal Avenue. The one thing I'm uneasy about is the breaking of the spatial pattern of the neighborhood. Stylistically, we have a lot more flexibility with changes in style in the neighborhood than we do spatial characteristics and that's why we have such discussions about attached garages versus detached garages. The driveway pattern is one of the things that's specifically called out in the guidelines, so I had real angst about that. The buildings are nice though.

> Programmatically, taking this whole property and splitting it into two is a good effort. It will help with the scale on the street, particularly at this end. I do have some concerns about the massing at the 1110 Bernal Avenue property which was described by the designer as Dutch colonial architecture, but I'm not seeing a Dutch Colonial style. The house is 44-1/2' wide and it has a big flat roof on top. When I hear Dutch Colonial architecture, I think of the gambrel roof, a true gambrel form. When we come to the side of this house, it's a two-story box that had some dormers added to the front. Otherwise, those second story walls are tilted a little bit to angle like a gambrel roof, but they are really trims added on and span between two structured gambrels across the top as you see on the other elevations. So I'm having some concerns, particularly when you look at the fact that you have a 9-1/2' plate height and 9'-2" plate height on the second floor. It's a wider lot, but you're taking that mass and take two stories straight up and adorn them with gambrel trims and slanted facades. I'm reminded of some of the projects that have come before us that are a newer Craftsman style house, large sweeping roof with second floor tucked under dormers, but the dormers are stretched out all the way to the front elevation and the side elevations. We then end up with a Craftsman roof that is just composed of overhangs and trims along the side of what is a two-story structure. I'm a little uneasy about the massing of the structure at 1110 Bernal Avenue. I'm not sure if I can make that particular finding in terms of the design review for mass and bulk.

> In regards to 1112 Bernal Avenue, it is massed nicely. It has good scale and the roof finishes itself off nicely. I do agree with my fellow Commissioner that it lacks adornment. Particularly, if you look at that second floor peak, it has a big forehead above that second floor roof with very little articulation. So maybe it's trying to be a modern interpretation of a farmhouse, but it's slammed up against what is a heavily detailed trying to be Dutch Colonial architecture. Not that the two have to marry or even relate, but to have this amount of stripped down detail next to that one that has a lot of detail to hide a two-story box, I'm uneasy about where we're at with these two projects.

> I would echo my fellow Commissioners' opinions on this. I have been sitting back hearing what everyone else thought. On the 1110 Bernal Avenue project, I never thought that putting a big flat roof in the middle of a house is a good way to solve the issues of massing and what we're trying to do on the second floor is break it up a little bit. It appears very flat and boxy as my fellow Commissioner said. I'm uneasy about that. The other house can use a little bit more detail and pay more attention to that detail. I would like to see some of the missing parts added to the plans that are noted in the staff report about the average top of curb being incorrect and the declining height envelope for both sides, as well as the arborist report in the next round.

> I agree with my fellow Commissioner. I would like the applicant to look at the driveway pattern again before it comes back. With the way the existing driveways are situated, there's a lot of space to the right of 1116 Bernal Avenue that could be used to space there. It's hard to tell during my site visit and it looks like there may be an existing screening on 1116 Bernal Avenue that would help with the separation there. If the driveway was flipped to the other side, then the house at 1110 Bernal Avenue could be shifted over a little bit to the left and allow for more screening to the house on the corner of Carmelita Avenue. Because that's a corner house, there's very little setback between 1110 Bernal Avenue and that house, so some additional attention could be placed there with screening. I know the applicant said they're going to work with that neighbor which is great.

Commissioner Sargent made a motion, seconded by Chair Tse, to place the item on the Regular Action Calendar when the application has been revised as directed. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Sargent, Comaroto, Terrones, Tse, Gaul, Loftis, and Schmid