



CITY OF BURLINGAME PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item: 7a	Hearing Date: April 13, 2026
Project No.	DSR25-0023
Location	1355 De Soto Avenue APN: 027-152-060
Applicant and Architect	Grant Takahashi Lee
Property Owners	Kearns-Ngyuen Family Trust
Staff	Erika Lewit, Senior Planner
General Plan Designation	Low Density Residential
Zoning	R-1 (Low Density Residential)
Lot Area	6,000 SF

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Review of an application for Major Design Review and Special Permit for plate height to construct a 549 square-foot first and second story addition to an existing 2,849 square-foot single-unit dwelling on a 6,000 square-foot site in the R-1 (Low Density Residential) zoning district.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission, by resolution, approve the Major Design Review and Special Permit applications as conditioned.

BACKGROUND

The subject property is an interior lot and currently contains a 2,849 square-foot, two-story single-unit dwelling with a 385 square-foot detached garage. The applicant proposes to add 259 SF to the first floor and 290 SF to the second floor. The existing detached garage will not be altered. The project requires a Major Design Review application reviewed by the Planning Commission (C.S. 25.68.020.C.1.b.).

The applicant is requesting a Special Permit for a 9'-1" plate height at the second floor addition, which would match the existing 9'-1" plate height on the second floor (9'-1" proposed where 8'-0" is the maximum allowed on the second floor) (C.S. 25.10.030, Table 25.10-2 and 25.78.020.A.6.).

February 23, 2026, Planning Commission Meeting

At the Planning Commission study meeting on February 23, 2026 the Commission had several suggestions regarding this project and voted to place this item on the Action Calendar when all information has been submitted and reviewed by the Planning Division.

The applicant submitted revised plans, date stamped March 12, 2026, to address the Planning Commission's comments. Below is a summary of the Commission's comments and changes made to the project:

1. Consider using a different siding material at the rear corner of the house, one that doesn't absorb so much heat.
 - The Applicant changed the previously proposed composite wood siding to stucco to match the rest of the elevations (see revised south side and rear elevations and revised rendering).
2. There should be a consistent approach to windows on all four elevations. Would like to see more divided lites on windows and more thought put into the shapes and sizes of windows on the right elevation.
 - The proposed overall design includes horizontal divided lites on portrait-oriented windows and the rear sliding door, and no divided lites on landscape-oriented windows.

To maintain this consistency, horizontal divided lites were added to the portrait-oriented window on the right (north elevation) in the second floor primary bathroom. A third portrait-oriented window with horizontal divided lites was added on the north elevation, located in the second floor rear bedroom.

The Applicant wishes to retain the previously proposed primary bedroom window on the north elevation as a landscape-oriented opening at the top of the wall, both to allow for both privacy and for furniture placement as there is already a large landscape-oriented window at the front-facing elevation of the primary bedroom. No divided lites are proposed for the landscape-oriented window on the north elevation of the primary bedroom to maintain consistency with the window design pattern proposed throughout the project.

The applicant notes that this landscape-oriented window at the primary bedroom on the north elevation is centered according to the interior dimensions of the room and that the entire second floor wall on that elevation is a single plane. While the window length could be shortened, it would still not be centered under the gable and that would be true for any window configurations at this location.

3. Add an architectural detail, such as a vent or plaster medallion, on the second floor gable at the front of the house.
 - Decorative terracotta gable vent pipes were added to the second floor gable at the front of the house (see revised front elevation and rendering).
4. Consider changing the front patio windows from casements to sliding windows.
 - The Applicant decided to keep the casement windows as previously proposed. With both indoor heating and cooling planned, conflicts with opened casement windows and use of the front patio area are not anticipated to occur often.
5. Concerned with the new roof tiles matching the patina on the existing roof tiles.
 - The Applicant has the same concern and plans for all existing terracotta roof tiles to be removed and low-pressure washed for reuse to minimize consistency issues with the new roof tiles.

6. Update the renderings to reflect consistency with the design intent.

- The renderings have been updated accordingly.

ANALYSIS

Please note, this application was deemed complete prior to April 1, 2026, the effective date of the recently adopted Zoning Code Amendments, and therefore was reviewed under the previous Zoning Code. The analysis below provides information and development standard review based on the previous requirements.

The project meets the applicable development standards for single-unit dwellings based on the R-1 zoning district, as shown in Table 1 below, with the exception of the 9'-1" second floor plate height.

Table 1: Project Information

	EXISTING	PREVIOUS PLANS 02/02/26	PROPOSED PLANS 03/04/26	ALLOWED/ REQ'D
Front Setback (1st flr): (2nd flr):	16'-6" 23'-4"	no change no change	no change no change	15'-0" 20'-0"
Side Setback (left): (right):	2'-7" ¹ 8'-6"	no change 8'-6"	no change no change	4'-0" 4'-0"
Rear Setback (1st flr): (2nd flr):	49'-4" 59'-6"	36'-5" 49'-5"	no change 52'-5"	15'-0" 20'-0"
Lot Coverage:	2,022 SF 34%	2,383 SF 39.7%	no change	2,400 SF 40%
FAR:	2,849 SF 0.48 FAR	3,384 SF 0.56 FAR	3,398 SF 0.57 FAR	3,405 SF ² 0.57 FAR
Off-Street Parking:	1 covered in garage (19'-9" x 17'-7") ³ 1 uncovered on driveway (9'-0" x 18'-0")	no change	no change	1 covered (10'-0" x 18'-0") 1 uncovered (9'-0" x 18'-0")

¹ Existing nonconforming left side setback to the first floor.
² (0.32 x 6,000 SF) + 1,100 SF + 385 SF = 3,405 SF (0.57 FAR).
³ Existing nonconforming depth for covered parking spaces.

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	EXISTING	PREVIOUS PLANS 02/02/26	PROPOSED PLANS 03/04/26	ALLOWED/ REQ'D
Building Height:	26'-7"	26'-7"	no change	30'-0"
Plate Height (1st flr): (2nd flr):	8'-4" 9'-1"	8'-4" 9'-1" ⁴	no change 9'-1" ⁴	9'-0" 8'-0"
Declining Height Envelope:	18 SF existing left side encroachment	complies	complies	C.S. 25.10.055.A.1.

⁴ Special Permit request for second floor plate height.

Urban Reforestation and Tree Protection Ordinance

Existing and proposed trees to be planted are shown on the Existing Site Plan and Landscape Plan. There are no existing trees of protected size on site. There is one existing landscape trees to remain on site, a Strawberry tree in the rear yard. Based on the proposed floor area, three landscape trees are required on-site. As part of this project, three new 24-inch box landscape trees are proposed (Magnolia, Ginko, and Crabapple). With a total of four trees on site, the project complies with the Urban Reforestation and Tree Protection Ordinance requirements. There is one existing street tree (Camphor) along the parcel frontage which is to remain. Tree protection measures are called out on Sheet L2.

Design Review

The proposed project has been designed in accordance with the Residential Design Guidelines and R-1 zoning district development standards, and design criteria for Major Design Review for single-unit dwellings established in Municipal Code Section 25.68.060.C., which requires:

1. Consistency with any applicable design guidelines;
2. Compatibility of the architectural style with that of the existing character of the neighborhood;
3. Respect for the parking and garage patterns in the neighborhood;
4. Architectural style and consistency and mass and bulk of structures, including accessory structures;
5. Interface of the proposed structure with the structures on adjacent properties;
6. Landscaping and its proportion to mass and bulk of structural components; and
7. In the case of an addition, compatibility with the architectural style and character of the existing structure as remodeled.

The proposed first and second story addition is compatible with the existing Spanish architectural style of the dwelling and includes distinctive architectural details such as arched windows at the first and second stories on the front elevation to echo the porch design, as well as terracotta roof tiles. The proposed design is consistent with the character and massing found in the neighborhood in that the design proposes plate heights that match those of the existing dwelling, gable roofs, articulated walls, and appropriate fenestration on all four building elevations. The architectural style is enhanced with details such as windows with divided lights with wood sills and arched wood gable vents that are consistent with the same or similar materials found in the neighborhood. The on-site landscaping, which includes retaining existing trees and

planting new 24-inch box size trees throughout the site, and the addition of flatwork and stucco walls to enhance the front elevation is appropriate and proportional to the mass and bulk of the house.

Summary of Proposed Exterior Materials

- **Windows:** aluminum clad wood, portrait-oriented windows with simulated true divided lites and spacer bars between and wood sills
- **Doors:** wood front door
- **Trim:** wood fascia
- **Siding:** stucco
- **Roof:** terracotta roof tile
- **Other:** metal railings and planter box, arched gable wood vents

Staff supports the requested Special Permit for the second floor plate height (9'-1" proposed) because it matches the existing second floor plate height and results in an overall balanced design that does not appear top-heavy. Staff does not have any suggested changes for the Planning Commission to consider.

Environmental Review

The project is Categorically Exempt from review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per Section 15301(e)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines, which states that additions to existing structures are exempt from environmental review, provided the addition will not result in an increase of more than 50% of the floor area of the structures before the addition.

Attachments:

Area Map
Resolution
Proposed Plans dated March 12, 2026
Previous Plans dated February 2, 2026