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# CITY OF BURLINGAME PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

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<b>Agenda Item: 7b</b>	<b>Hearing Date: April 13, 2026</b>
Project No.	DSR25-0019
Location	1505 Drake Avenue APN: 026-033-100
Applicant and Architect	Tim Raduenz, Form + One Design
Property Owners	Suchi Suchitra and Tarun Desikan
Staff	Emma Goldsmith, Associate 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, Special Permit for a second floor balcony, and Variances for first and second floor front setbacks to construct a 2,942 square-foot, two-story 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, Special Permit, and Variances applications as conditioned.

## BACKGROUND

The subject property is an interior lot and developed with an existing one-story single-unit dwelling and a detached garage and carport. The applicant proposes to demolish the existing single-unit dwelling and carport and build a 2,942 square-foot two-story single-unit dwelling. The project also includes retaining the existing detached garage and constructing a new detached accessory dwelling unit attached to the garage. 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 to allow a 48 square-foot second floor balcony at the rear of the house (Special Permit required for any second story balcony; 75 square-feet maximum allowed) (C.S. 25.10.035.7). The proposed balcony faces the rear yard and is at the center of the rear elevation off the primary bedroom. The proposed balcony is enclosed with a metal railing and has a 11'-3" left side setback and a 25'-7" right side setback, where an 8'-0" side setback is required (C.S. 25.10.030, Table 25.10-2).

The proposed project seeks two Variances for the front setbacks:

1. First floor setback at the front property line (20'-0" proposed, where 23'-1" is required based on the average front setback); and
2. Second floor setback at the front property line (18'-8" proposed where 23'-1" is required). The proposed second floor wall aligns with the 20'-0" first floor front setback, but would include a second floor bay window projection with a front setback of 18'-8".

A 537 square-foot detached accessory dwelling unit (ADU) will also be constructed in the rear of the lot and attached to the rebuilt detached garage. The review of the ADU is not part of this review and action. Based on State law, ADUs are reviewed and approved ministerially; the proposed ADU complies with the applicable regulations.

### **March 9, 2026, Planning Commission Meeting**

At the Planning Commission study meeting on March 9, 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 30, 2026, to address the Planning Commission's comments. Below is a summary of the Commission's comments and changes made to the project:

1. Look at pushing back the second floor at the front of the house so it is set back at least 20 feet from the front property line.
  - The main wall of the second floor has been pushed back to a front setback of 20'-0", with the second floor bay window projecting 1'-4" to a proposed front setback of 18'-8". To maintain the alignment of the first and second floor walls, the existing nonconforming first floor wall is proposed to be demolished and rebuilt to a front setback of 20'-0" (see revised Site Plan, sheet A1.0). Pushing back both the first and second story floor walls was intended to maintain the alignment of the walls, consistent with the proposed architectural style.
2. Carefully study the width and depth of the entry door to create more of a recess.
  - The depth of the entry has been increased from 2'-0" to 3'-0" (see revised First Floor Plan, sheet A2.0) and the height of the entry's arched opening has been increased from 9'-4" to 10'-1" (see revised Front Elevation, sheet A3.0).
3. Study the articulation at the front of the house; look for opportunities to better differentiate between the front entry door and front patio, including the design of the low wall.
  - The front entry door and patio are proposed to be separated by a planter area; the previously proposed low wall has been removed. The proposed planter would contain vines to climb the brick façade and create further separation between the two areas (see revised First Floor Plan, sheet A2.0).
4. Make sure that the rendering is an accurate representation of the design intent, especially relative to the neighbors; proposed finishes need to be accurately represented.
  - Updated renderings have been resubmitted to match the corrected elevations. In addition, these renderings have been revised to include accurate depictions of the neighboring homes.

### **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. As noted above, the proposed project complies with all development standards, with the exception of the first and second floor front setbacks and the second floor balcony.

**Table 1: Project Information**

	<b>PREVIOUS PLANS 02/19/26</b>	<b>PROPOSED PLANS 03/30/26</b>	<b>ALLOWED/REQ'D</b>
<b>Front Setback (1<sup>st</sup> flr): (2<sup>nd</sup> flr):</b>	17'-3" <sup>1</sup> 17'-3" to house/15'-11" to bay window <sup>2</sup>	20'-0" <sup>1</sup> 20'-0" to house/18'-8" to bay window <sup>2</sup>	23'-1" (block average) 23'-1"
<b>Side Setback (left): (right):</b>	2'-10" <sup>3</sup> 12'-8"	4'-0" no change	4'-0" 4'-0"
<b>Rear Setback (1<sup>st</sup> flr): (2<sup>nd</sup> flr):</b>	49'-1" 51'-0"	no change no change	15'-0" 20'-0"
<b>Lot Coverage:</b>	1,892 SF 31.5%	1,851 SF 30.9%	2,400 SF 40%
<b>FAR:</b>	3,315 SF 0.55 FAR	3,247 SF 0.54 FAR	3,325 SF <sup>4</sup> 0.55 FAR
<b>Off-Street Parking:</b>	1 covered in existing garage (14'-4" x 19'-3") 1 uncovered on driveway (9'-0 x 18'-0")	1 covered in existing garage (14'-4" x 19'-3") 1 uncovered on driveway (9'-0 x 18'-0")	1 covered (10'-0" x 18'-0") 1 uncovered (9'-0" x 18'-0")
<b>Building Height:</b>	29'-10"	no change	30'-0"
<b>Plate Height (1<sup>st</sup> flr): (2<sup>nd</sup> flr):</b>	8'-6" 8'-0"	no change no change	9'-0" 8'-0"
<b>Declining Height Envelope:</b>	complies	complies	C.S. 25.10.055.A.1.

<sup>1</sup> Variance requested for first floor front setback.  
<sup>2</sup> Variance requested for second floor front setback.  
<sup>3</sup> Variance previously required for side setback.  
<sup>4</sup> (0.32 x 6,000 SF) + 1,100 SF + 305 SF = 3,325 SF (0.55 FAR)

### Urban Reforestation and Tree Protection Ordinance

An Arborist Report was prepared by Kiely Arborist Services, dated January 6, 2026. The site contains six non-protected size trees and fruit trees which are proposed to be removed. Based on the proposed floor area, three landscape trees are required on-site. As part of this project, five new 24-inch box Trident Maple landscape trees are proposed. Therefore, the project complies with the Urban Reforestation and Tree Protection Ordinance requirements. A plant schedule for proposed trees and plantings can be found on sheet A1.2 of the proposed plans. There is one existing street tree (London Plane) along the parcel frontage which is to remain. Tree protection measures are called out on the landscape plan.

### **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 architectural style of the proposed dwelling utilizes both Tudor-style elements and modern finishes to create a contemporary Tudor design. The home incorporates traditional Tudor features such as a front gable, an arched brick and stone entry, and a mix of exterior finishes including stone, brick, and wood. The use of modern finishes, such as standing seam roofing and wood panel siding, creates a compatible mix of traditional elements with contemporary finishes. The bump out windows, as shown on the front and right elevations, further reinforces this combination of modern and Tudor elements. The use of wood siding at the windows creates the impression of half-timbering common with the Tudor style, and the corbels also create the impression of a slight overhang, which is also common with the Tudor style.

While the proposed architectural style is not present in the neighborhood, the proposed design is also compatible with the existing variety of dwelling styles in the neighborhood because of the use of high-quality materials, including wood siding and aluminum windows with wood trim.

### Summary of Proposed Exterior Materials

- **Windows:** aluminum clad window with simulated true divided lites with mutins on the exterior and interior of the window and spacer bars between the glass
- **Doors:** solid oak and glass door and simulated true divided lites with mutins on the exterior and interior of the window and spacer bars between the glass; aluminum clad glass sliding doors with simulated true divided lites with mutins on the exterior and interior of the window and spacer bars between the glass
- **Trim:** redwood window and door trim; standing brick header above windows; stone surround for doors on the front elevation

- **Siding:** 6”– 8” stained red cedar siding, brick veneer exterior finish (white washed)
- **Roof:** asphalt shingles; standing seam metal roof accents above windows, porch, and second-floor balcony
- **Other:** custom wood clad steel driveway gate with wood lattice detailing; stone porch on front elevation; redwood trellis at rear elevation; stone server bar on rear elevation with 4x4 wood bracket; metal balcony railing at rear elevation; stone corbel details; 4x4 wood bracket below bump out windows; recessed wood vent detail in gable roof

In addition to the proposed Design Review, the applicant requests two entitlements, a Special Permit for a second floor balcony at the rear of the dwelling and Variances for first and second floor front setbacks. There are different thresholds for approval for these entitlements. Whereas Special Permits allow structures that, while not permitted by right, may be considered compatible and appropriate if designed with consideration to the new structure and surrounding context (C.S. 25.78.020.B.), Variances allow an exception to development standards only under exceptional or extraordinary circumstances (C.S. 25.84.030).

For the proposed project, staff is supportive of the requested Special Permit for the second floor balcony as it is designed in a manner that considers the surrounding residential context (C.S. 25.78.020.A.7. and 25.10.030, Table 25.10-2). As proposed, the 48 square-foot balcony falls beneath the required size threshold and exceeds the required 8’-0” side setback, providing an 11’-3” left side setback and a 25’-7” right side setback. In addition, the balcony provides further privacy as it is located at the rear of the dwelling, is recessed into the wall plane on the right side and incorporates a railing that offers additional screening. The design and exterior finish materials of the proposed balcony are consistent with the design of the dwelling and neighborhood and are consistent with the residential design guidelines. For these reasons, the proposed second floor balcony complies with the required Special Permit findings in C.S. 25.78.020.B.

For the proposed project, staff is in support of the requested Variances as the revised project will reduce the degree of the existing nonconforming front setback and maintain consistency with the proposed architectural style. The exceptional circumstance that applies to the subject property is that the existing dwelling has a nonconforming first floor front setback of 17’-3”, which is the lowest front setback on the subject side of the block, and the average front setback is influenced by significantly greater front setbacks, ranging from 20.8 to 31.4 feet. Currently, the subject site has a setback of 17’-3”, which is consistent with the smaller front setbacks of the adjacent residences, at 15’-11” and 21’-6”. Although the proposed 20’-0” front setback does not comply with the required block average front setback of 23’-1, it reduces the nonconformity of the existing setback. In addition, the revision also responds to the Planning Commission’s request to bring the second story setback to 20’-0”, which complies with the minimum required second story setback for the R-1 zoning district.

### **Environmental Review**

The project is Categorically Exempt from review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per Section 15303 (a) of the CEQA Guidelines, which states that construction of a limited number of new, small facilities or structures, including one single-family residence, or a second dwelling unit in a residential zone, is exempt from environmental review. In urbanized areas, this exemption may be applied to the construction or conversion of up to three (3) single-family residences as part of a project.

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**Attachments:**

Area Map  
Arborist Report  
Resolution  
Renderings  
Proposed Plans dated March 30, 2026  
Previous Plans dated February 19, 2026