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# CITY OF BURLINGAME PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

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<b>Agenda Item: 8a</b>	<b>Hearing Date: March 9, 2025</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 and left side setback to construct a 3,010 square-foot, two-story single unit-dwelling on a 6,000 square-foot site in the R-1 (Low Density Residential) zoning district.

## 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 3,010 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 project qualifies as substantial construction because more than 50 percent of the exterior walls of the existing dwelling are proposed to be demolished. (C.S. 25.108.200.) Therefore, the Municipal Code requires that existing nonconformities be brought into compliance with current requirements, including bringing the existing nonconforming setbacks into compliance (C.S. 25.54.010.B.3.a.). The proposed project seeks three variances to maintain existing setbacks:

1. First floor setback at the front property line (17'-3" existing/proposed, where 23'-1" is required based on the average front setback);
2. First floor setback at the left side property line (2'-10" existing/proposed, where 4'-0" is required); and
3. Second floor setback at the front property line (15'-11" proposed where 23'-1" is required). The proposed second floor wall aligns with the 17'-3" first floor front setback but would include a second floor bay window projection with a front setback of 15'-11".

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.

**ANALYSIS**

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, first floor left side setback, and second floor balcony.

**Table 1: Project Information**

	<b>PROPOSED</b>	<b>ALLOWED/REQ'D</b>
<b>Front Setback (1<sup>st</sup> flr):</b> <b>(2<sup>nd</sup> flr):</b>	17'-3" <sup>1</sup> 17'-3" to house/15'-11" to bay window <sup>2</sup>	23'-1" (block average) 23'-1"
<b>Side Setback (left):</b> <b>(right):</b>	2'-10" <sup>3</sup> 12'-8"	4'-0" 4'-0"
<b>Rear Setback (1<sup>st</sup> flr):</b> <b>(2<sup>nd</sup> flr):</b>	49'-1" 51'-0"	15'-0" 20'-0"
<b>Lot Coverage:</b>	1,892 SF 31.5%	2,400 SF 40%
<b>FAR:</b>	3,315 SF 0.55 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 (10'-0" x 18'-0")  1 uncovered (9'-0" x 18'-0")
<b>Building Height:</b>	29'-10"	30'-0"
<b>Plate Height (1<sup>st</sup> flr):</b> <b>(2<sup>nd</sup> flr):</b>	8'-6" 8'-0"	9'-0" 8'-0"
<b>Declining Height Envelope:</b>	complies	C.S. 25.10.055.A.1.

<sup>1</sup> Variance requested for first floor front setback to maintain the existing nonconforming setback.

<sup>2</sup> Variance requested for second floor front setback.

<sup>3</sup> Variance requested for first floor side setback to maintain the existing nonconforming 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 with a catslide roof, 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:** wood window 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

As noted above, the applicant requests several entitlements including a Special Permit for a second floor balcony at the rear of the dwelling and Variances for first and second floor front setbacks and first floor left side setback. The threshold for approval for these entitlements varies.

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.). In particular, all second floor balconies must not be designed as viewing platforms and may only be up to 75 square feet in size and must have two times the minimum required side setback (8’-0 in this case) (C.S. 25.78.020.A.7. and 25.10.030, Table 25.10-2). 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. As proposed, the 48 square-foot balcony falls beneath the required size threshold and exceeds the required side setback, providing a 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.

Separately, the requested Variances for the reduced first and second floor front setbacks and first floor left side setback are subject to a higher threshold for approval. Based on Code Section 25.84.030, Variances may be considered when 1) there are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances on the property that do not apply generally to property in the same zoning district, 2) granting of the Variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right of the applicant and to prevent unreasonable property loss or unnecessary hardship, 3) granting of the application will not be detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity and will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, general welfare or convenience; and 4) the use of the property will be compatible with the aesthetics, mass, bulk, and character of existing and potential uses of properties in the general vicinity.

For the proposed project, staff is not in support of the requested Variances in that there are no exceptional or extraordinary circumstances on the property, and that bringing the property into compliance with required development standards would not deprive the property of the development privileges by similarly situated properties nor create unreasonable property loss or unnecessary hardship since the majority of the existing house is proposed to be demolished.

**Attachments:**

- Area Map
- Public Comments
- Renderings
- Proposed Plans dated February 19, 2026