



CITY OF BURLINGAME PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item: 7c	Hearing Date: September 8, 2025
Project No.	DSR25-0008
Location	229 Bancroft Road APN: 029-263-060
Applicant	Xiaowen Song
Property Owner	Hongzhi Liang
Staff	Ruben Hurin, Planning Manager
General Plan Designation	Low Density Residential
Zoning	R-1 (Low Density Residential)
Lot Area	5,750 SF

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Review of an application for Major Design Review and Special Permits for plate height, second floor balcony, and attached garage for a new, two-story single-unit dwelling and attached garage in the R-1 (Low Density Residential) zoning district.

RECOMMENDATION

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

BACKGROUND

The subject property is an interior lot with an existing one-story single-unit dwelling and a detached garage. The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing dwelling and garage and build a new, two-story, single-unit dwelling and attached one-car garage. The proposed floor area is 2,921 SF (0.51 FAR) where 2,940 SF (0.51 FAR) is the maximum allowed (includes covered porch exemption).

A Special Permit is being requested for proposed plate heights on the first floor at the front porch and attached garage. The proposed project includes a 9'-5" plate height at the front porch and a 10'-3" plate height at the attached garage, where 9'-0" is the maximum plate height allowed for the first floor.

A Special Permit is being requested for a 24 SF second story balcony at the rear of the house (Special Permit required for any second story balcony; 75 SF maximum allowed). The second floor balcony is required to be setback from the side property lines by at least 8'-0" (11'-11" and 30'-1" side setbacks are proposed).

A Special Permit is also being requested for the attached garage. Code Section 25.10.035 requires a Special Permit for an attached garage and that it be setback at least 25'-0" from the front property line (25'-9" proposed).

The dwelling would contain four bedrooms. Two parking spaces, one of which must be covered, are required for a four-bedroom dwelling. One covered parking space (10'-0" x 20'-0" clear interior dimensions) is provided in the attached garage and one uncovered parking space (9'-0" x 18'-0") is provided in the driveway.

The existing site contains four non-protected trees (three fruit trees and a Glossy privet), which are proposed to be removed. Based on the proposed floor area, three landscape trees are required on-site. Proposed are three new Ginko Biloba trees (24-inch box size) located at the front and rear of the property. Therefore, the project complies with the Urban Reforestation and Tree Protection Ordinance requirements. Two existing street trees will remain.

The applicant is requesting the following applications:

- Major Design Review for a new, two-story single-unit dwelling and attached garage (C.S. 25.68.020.C.1.a.);
- Special Permit for first floor plate height (9'-5" proposed at porch and 10'-3" proposed at attached garage where 9'-0" is the maximum plate height allowed on the first floor) (C.S. 25.10.030);
- Special Permit for a second floor balcony (24 SF proposed where up to 75 SF is allowed with a Special Permit) (C.S. 25.10.035.7.); and
- Special Permit for an attached garage (C.S. 25.10.035.1.).

ANALYSIS

The project complies with the Residential Design Guidelines and all applicable R-1 zoning development standards. The proposed dwelling integrates well with the neighborhood character, featuring traditional design elements including a covered front porch, hip roof forms, stucco and horizontal wood siding, proportional plate heights, fiberglass windows with simulated divided lites, and articulated massing. The proposed design will be integrated into the neighborhood with the use of quality materials and architectural elements. Staff does not have any recommended changes for the Planning Commission to consider.

July 14, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting

At the Planning Commission study meeting on July 14, 2025, the Commission had several suggestions regarding this project and voted to place this item on Action when all information has been submitted and reviewed by the Planning Division.

The applicant submitted revised plans, date stamped August 26, 2025, to address the Planning Commission's comments. Below is a summary of the Commission's comments and changes made to the project.

1. Provide extra attention to the design and material of the garage door.
 - The design of the garage door has been revised from a standard multi-panel door to a modern door with horizontal glass panels along the left side of the door. The material is steel, but is made to look like wood. See revised renderings and Material Schedule and Front Elevation on sheet A-3.0.
2. Consider adding to the materials that are currently being used.
 - Horizontal wood siding was added to a portion of the second floor at the front of the house, which wraps around the corner along the right side of the house (see revised renderings and building elevations).

3. Provide better detailing of the bay windows on the front elevation. Second floor window above front porch should be centered.
 - With the revised design and articulation of the massing on the second floor, the previously proposed bay windows and second floor window above the front porch at the front of the house were eliminated. In addition, grids have been added to most of the windows throughout the house to provide a more traditional look (see revised renderings and building elevations).
4. Needs to provide a landscape plan.
 - The landscape was revised to show additional information regarding the proposed landscaping throughout the site. One of the three proposed Ginkgo Biloba trees was relocated from the rear yard to the front yard (see revised Landscape Plan, sheet A-1.4).
5. Address the wedding cake look of the design and improve the articulation on the second floor.
 - While the second floor is still primary centered above the first floor, articulation and an additional material (horizontal wood siding) was added along the front and right sides of the house to help reduce the wedding cake look (see revised renderings, floor plans, and building elevations).

Table 1: Project Information

Table 1 below compares the proposed project to the development standards for a single-unit dwelling based on the R-1 zoning district.

	PREVIOUS (06/23/25 plans)	PROPOSED (08/26/25 plans)	ALLOWED/REQ'D
Front Setback (1st flr): (2nd flr): (attached garage) ¹:	23'-2" 33'-8" 27'-1"	no change 32'-3" no change	21'-4" (block average) 21'-4" (block average) 25'-0"
Side Setback (left): (right):	4'-6" 4'-0"	no change no change	4'-0" 4'-0"
Rear Setback (1st flr): (2nd flr):	37'-8" 42'-7"	no change no change	15'-0" 20'-0"
Lot Coverage:	2,078 SF 36.1%	2,106 SF 36.6%	2,300 SF 40%
FAR:	2,883 SF 0.50 FAR	2,921 SF ² 0.51 FAR	2,940 SF 0.51 FAR

¹ Special Permit requested for attached garage.

² $(0.32 \times 5,750 \text{ SF}) + 1100 \text{ SF} = 2,940 \text{ SF}$ maximum allowed (0.51 FAR).

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	PREVIOUS (06/23/25 plans)	PROPOSED (08/26/25 plans)	ALLOWED/REQ'D
Off-Street Parking:	2 covered (10'-0" x 20'-0") 1 uncovered (9' x 18')	no change	1 covered (10' x 18') 1 uncovered (9' x 18')
Building Height:	24'-10"	no change	30'-0"
Plate Height (1st flr): (2nd flr): (attached garage):	9'-0"/9'-5" at front porch ³ 8'-0" 10'-3" ³	no change	9'-0" maximum 8'-0" maximum 9'-0" maximum
Declining Height Envelope:	complies	no change	C.S. 25.10.055
Second Floor Balcony ⁴:	24 SF (11'-11" and 30'-1" side setbacks)	no change	75 SF (8'-0" side setbacks)

³ Special Permit for garage plate height at front porch and attached garage.

⁴ Special Permit requested for second floor balcony.

Summary of Proposed Exterior Materials:

- **Windows:** fiberglass windows with simulated divided lites and integrated brickmold trim
- **Doors:** aluminum
- **Garage Doors:** steel with wood look
- **Siding:** smooth stucco and horizontal wood
- **Roof:** flat tile roof shingle
- **Other:** frosted glass railing for deck on second floor

Design Review Criteria

The criteria for design review as established in Ordinance No. 2000 adopted by the City Council on December 6, 2021 are outlined as follows:

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.

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.

Attachments:

Area Map
Resolution
Proposed Plans dated August 26, 2025
Previous Plans dated June 23, 2025