



CITY OF BURLINGAME PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

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| Agenda Item: 8c | Hearing Date: September 8, 2025 |
| Project No. | DSR25-0023 |
| Location | 1385 Hillside Circle, Lot 3 APN: 027-282-050 |
| Applicant and Architect/Designer | James Chu - Chu Design Associates, Inc. |
| Property Owner | Sherman Chiu and Jen Ngo |
| Staff | Catherine Keylon, Senior Planner |
| General Plan Designation | Low Density Residential |
| Zoning | R-1 (Low Density Residential) |
| Lot Area | Existing Parcel: 36,955 SF Proposed Lot 3: 13,226 SF |

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Review of an application for Lot Subdivision, Major Design Review, Hillside Area Construction Permit and Special Permits for declining height envelope and attached garage to subdivide one lot into three lots and construct one new, two-story single-unit dwelling on each of the three newly created lots in the R-1 (Low Density Residential) zoning district.

This staff report pertains to the proposal for 1385 Hillside Circle, Lot 3 (refer to separate staff reports prepared for proposals on Lots 1 and 2).

BACKGROUND

The project site is currently one 36,955 square foot parcel that is a through lot, bounded by Hillside Circle to the north and Easton Drive to the south, with a steep downward slope toward Easton Drive. The existing dwelling on the site is approximately 11,300 square feet and contains two stories, plus a basement. The site has two accessory structures including an approximately 1,856 square foot detached garage in the northeastern corner of the site and an approximately 661 square foot detached garage in the southwestern corner of the site. The existing house fronts on Hillside Circle and the detached garage has frontage along Easton Drive. The site contains four trees, consisting of three protected size Oak trees (18.8, 19.1 and 26.4 inches in diameter) and one Acacia tree. The Acacia tree is non-protected (8-inch diameter) and is proposed to be removed. There is an African fern pine tree off-site to the east.

In 2019 there was unlawful tree removals on the site. There were several protected size trees removed, in addition to a significant amount of shrubs, unprotected size trees and other foliage removed from the rear of the site, abutting Easton Drive. A Tree Removal Permit was applied for in 2023 for a Redwood tree and Coast Live Oak tree; that permit was appealed and following a hearing was ultimately approved by the Beautification Commission.

PROPOSAL

The applicant has submitted an application to demolish all existing structures on-site, subdivide the parcel into three individual lots, and construct three, two-story, single-unit dwellings, with one residence on each lot. Each of the new three properties would front directly on Hillside Circle with no access from Easton Drive, with the exception of Lot 3 which would have pedestrian access directly from Easton Drive to the new dwelling. The project would include the construction of a new driveway for each of the three proposed lots from Hillside Circle.

The following information pertains to Lot 3; please refer to the separate staff reports prepared for Lots 1 and 2 for project information pertaining to those lots.

Lot 3 would measure 13,226 square feet in size and would be located on the far west side of the project site. The applicant proposes the construction of a new, two-story single unit dwelling with an attached garage. The total proposed floor area would be 3,950 SF (0.29 FAR), where 5,332 SF (0.40 FAR) is the maximum allowed (including a 78 SF front porch exemption).

The subject property is located within the Hillside Overlay Zone; each of the applications for the three lots would include a Hillside Area Construction permit. Code Section 25.20.040 states that hillside development shall be designed to preserve existing distant views. View preservation shall be limited to obstruction of distant views to San Francisco Bay, the San Francisco Airport, and Mills Canyon from primary indoor living areas, such as living rooms and family rooms (Code Section 25.20.040.B.).

With the proposed project, there would be five bedrooms (den qualifies as a bedroom per C.S. 25.108.030). Three parking spaces, two of which must be covered, are required for a five-bedroom house. The proposed attached garage would provide two covered parking space (20'-0" x 20'-0" clear interior dimensions) where 20'-0" x 18'-0" is the minimum required. Two uncovered parking spaces (20'-0" x 25'-0") are provided in the driveway. The application includes a Special Permit for an attached garage.

The entire site contains five existing landscape trees. One of which is a Coast Live Oak tree that is located on the downslope of this proposed Lot 3, in the rear along the western property line. This tree would remain and tree protections are proposed during construction.

Based on the proposed floor area, four landscape trees are required on-site. The existing Coast Live Oak tree in the rear yard that is being protected counts toward meeting this requirement. There are two 24-inch box Trident maple trees and one 24-inch box Maidenhair tree proposed to be planted as part of the development on Lot 3. Therefore, the project complies with the Urban Reforestation and Tree Protection Ordinance requirements. In addition, a comprehensive landscape plan has been provided with hardscape and softscape at the front and terraced at the rear of the property. An arborist report was prepared by Kieley Arborist Services, dated February 16, 2024, and is attached for reference.

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 an attached garage (C.S. 25.10.035.1.); and
- Hillside Area Construction Permit for a new, two-story single-unit dwelling and attached garage (C.S. 25.70.020.A.).

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ANALYSIS

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.

| | PROPOSED | ALLOWED/REQ'D |
|--|---|---|
| Front Setback (main flr): (lower flr): (attached garage): | 21'-2" N/A (no street frontage) 26'-3" | 16'-9" (block average) N/A (no street frontage) 25'-0" – garage (2 doors) |
| Side Setback (left): (right): | 7'-0" 7'-0" | 7'-0" 7'-0" |
| Rear (main flr): (lower flr): | 121'-9" 109'-0" | 15'-0" 20'-0" |
| Lot Coverage: | 3,087 SF 23.3% | 5,290 SF 40% |
| FAR: | 3,950 SF 0.29 FAR | 5,332 SF ¹ 0.40 FAR |
| Off-Street Parking: | 2 covered (20'-0" x 20'-0" clear interior) 2 uncovered (20'-0" x 26'-0") | 2 covered (20' x 18' clear interior) 1 uncovered (9' x 18') |
| Building Height: | 14'-10" | 20'-0" ² |
| Plate Height (main flr): (lower flr): | 9'-0" 9'-0" | 9'-0" 9'-0" |
| DH Envelope: | Special Permit requested for DHE encroachment along right and left sides ³ | C.S. 25.10.055.A.1. |

¹ (0.32 x 13,226 SF) + 1,100 SF = 5,332 SF (0.40 FAR)

² Per C.S. 25.30.040.A.2. height is limited to 20'-0" above average top of curb on lots with a slope of 20% slope or greater.

³ Special Permit requested for declining height envelope (593 SF extends beyond the DHE along right side of house and 44.38 SF extends beyond the DHE along the left side of the house).

Summary of Proposed Exterior Materials:

- **Windows:** aluminum clad wood with simulated true divided lites
- **Doors:** wood entry door with glass sidelights, wood garage door with raised panel
- **Siding:** 6-inch horizontal wood siding, stucco
- **Roof:** composition shingles
- **Other:** stainless steel railing with cable guardrail

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.

Attachments:

Area Map
Arborist Report
Public Comment Emails
Proposed Plans dated August 27, 2025