



CITY OF GLENDALE, CA

DESIGN REVIEW STAFF REPORT – HILLSIDE SINGLE FAMILY

November 14, 2024

Hearing Date

589 Arch Place

Address

Design Review Board (DRB)

Review Type

5666-004-019

APN

PDR-003227-2024

Case Number

Vartan Jangozian

Applicant

Aileen Babakhani

Case Planner

Arsen Agajanian

Owner

Project Summary

To construct a new 3,285 square-foot, two-story single-family residence with an attached two-car garage on a 13,053 square-foot hillside, vacant lot with an average current slope of approximately 74 percent, located in the R1R-II (Restricted Residential - Floor Area Ratio District II) zone.

Environmental Review

The project is exempt from CEQA review as a Class 3 "New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures" exemption pursuant to Section 15303(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines, because the project only involves the development of one single-family residence.

Existing Property/Background

The project site is an interior, hillside vacant lot with approximately 13,053 square feet in area (0.3 acres). The irregularly shaped, down-sloped lot has an average current slope of 74 percent and fronts Arch Place which is a remote cul-de-sac. The subject property is the last parcel located on the west side of the street. There are multiple protected indigenous trees located on the site and within 20 feet of the site. One coast live oak tree and three dead oak trees are located near the construction area. To accommodate the proposed development, the live oak tree and three dead oak trees will be removed. Urban Forestry has reviewed the proposal and supports the removal of the oak trees and requires a total of five new coast live oak trees to be planted. There are also five street trees adjacent to the property and Urban Forestry requires the removal of two of these trees without replacements due to the space constraint. The project must comply with the protective measures required by the Urban Forestry and the mitigation measures of the Indigenous Tree Report, provided by the applicant (Attachment # 5).

As proposed, the project will involve an approximately 800 cubic yards of cut and fill; and a total of 76 percent of the site will remain as ungraded open space.

Standards and Setback Variance No. PVAR-001654-2023 was approved on March 22, 2024, by the Planning Hearing Officer for not providing the required minimum street front setback and driveway length in conjunction with the construction of the proposed house (See Attachment # 7).

Staff Recommendation

Approve with Conditions

Last Date Reviewed / Decision

First time submittal for final review.

Zone: RIR FAR District: III

Although this design review does not convey final zoning approval, the project has been reviewed for consistency with the applicable Codes and no inconsistencies have been identified.

Active/Pending Permits and Approvals

Standards and Setback Variance No. PVAR-001654-2023 was approved by the Planning Hearing Officer on March 22, 2024, for not providing the required minimum street front setback and driveway length in conjunction with the construction of a new 3,285 square-foot, two-story single-family residence.

Site Slope and Grading

50% or greater average current slope. The average current slope of the site is 74 percent and the project will involve approximately 800 cubic yards of cut and fill.

Neighborhood Survey

	Average of Properties within 300 linear feet of subject property	Range of Properties within 300 linear feet of subject property	Subject Property Proposal
Lot size	12,505 sq.ft.	5,166 sq.ft. to 862,500 sq.ft.	13,053 sq.ft.
Setback	27 ft.	5 ft. to 100 ft.	5 ft.
House size	2,539 sq.ft.	400 sq.ft. to 5,885 sq.ft.	3,285 sq.ft.
Floor Area Ratio	0.20	0.08 to 0.70	0.25
Number of stories	One- and two-story	One- and two-story (60 % of homes are two-story)	two-story

DESIGN ANALYSIS

Site Planning

Are the following items satisfactory and compatible with the project site and surrounding area?

Building Location

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Setbacks of buildings on site
- ☐ Prevailing setbacks on the street
- ☐ Building and decks follow topography
- ☐ Alteration of landform minimized

Yards and Usable Open Space

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Avoid altering landform to create flat yards
- ☐ Outdoor areas integrated into open space
- ☐ Use of retaining walls minimized
- ☐ Provide landscaping to reduce visual impact of retaining walls
- ☐ Decorative material used for retaining walls to blend into landscape and/or complement the building design

Garage Location and Driveway

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Consistent with predominant pattern on street
- ☐ Compatible with primary structure
- ☐ Permeable paving material
- ☐ Decorative paving

Landscape Design

☐ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☒ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Complementary to building design and surrounding site
- ☐ Maintains existing trees when possible
- ☐ Maximizes permeable surfaces
- ☒ Appropriately sized and located

New drought-tolerant landscaping is proposed that complements the building design. In order to comply with Urban Forestry’s requirements, the project will be required to plant five oak trees for the removal of one live oak tree and three dead oak trees. A condition of approval requires the applicant to update the landscape plan to meet the Urban Forestry’s requirements and obtain the required Indigenous Tree and Street Tree Permits.

Walls and Fences

☒ yes ☐ n/a ☐ no

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Appropriate style/color/material
- ☐ Perimeter walls treated at both sides
- ☐ Retaining walls minimized
- ☐ Appropriately sized and located
- ☐ Stormwater runoff minimized

Determination of Compatibility: Site Planning

The proposed site planning is appropriate, as modified by any proposed conditions, to the site and its surroundings for the following reasons:

- The proposed two-story house follows the site’s topography, which slopes down sharply from the street frontage. The design is appropriately integrated into the down-sloped terrain by stepping back the upper story from the downhill part of the site.
- Variance No. PVAR-001654-2023 was approved with conditions and allows a reduced street front setback of five feet (5’-0”), where a minimum of 15-foot street front setback is required, and a reduced driveway length of six feet three & one-quarter inches (6’- 3 ¼”), where a minimum 18-foot driveway length is required. The project will comply with all other development standards, including interior setbacks.
- While the new house provides a reduced street front setback and driveway length, the development is compatible with the prevailing setbacks on the street and follows the development pattern in the immediate hillside neighborhood and along the street. Similar to the proposed development, most existing houses along Arch Place and within 300 feet of the subject property feature reduced front setbacks, approved by variances in the 1950s and 1960s. In addition, pulling the house closer to the street will help minimize landform alteration and preserve the greatest amount of the existing open space and indigenous protected trees.
- New drought-tolerant landscaping is proposed that complements the building design. In order to comply with the Urban Forestry’s requirements, the project will be required to plant five oak trees for the removal of one live oak tree and three dead oak trees. A condition of approval requires the applicant to update the landscape plan to meet the Urban Forestry’s requirements and obtain the required Indigenous Tree and Street Tree Permits. Two of the five street trees will also be removed, and Urban Forestry does not require the street tree replacement due to the space constraints.
- The design and location of the attached two-car garage and driveway (with decorative pavers) are compatible with the overall design concept and neighborhood context. The new driveway will vary in length from a minimum of 6’- 3 ¼” to the maximum of 18’-7¼”. The reduced length was approved by Variance No. PVAR-001654-2023. The driveway will have a maximum 11 percent slope.
- A new retaining wall with the maximum height of 5 feet will be located at the front of the house, parallel to the street, and will be a decorative block wall with the earth-colored grouts to complement the building design.

Massing and Scale

Are the following items satisfactory and compatible with the project site and surrounding area?

Building Relates to its Surrounding Context

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Appropriate proportions and transitions
- ☐ Impact of larger building minimized

Building Relates to Existing Topography

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Form and profile follow topography
- ☐ Alteration of existing land form minimized
- ☐ Retaining walls terrace with slope

Consistent Architectural Concept

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Concept governs massing and height

Scale and Proportion

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Scale and proportion fit context
- ☐ Articulation avoids overbearing forms
- ☐ Appropriate solid/void relationships
- ☐ Entry and major features well located
- ☐ Avoids sense of monumentality

Roof Forms

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Roof reinforces design concept
- ☐ Configuration appropriate to context

Determination of Compatibility: Mass and Scale

The proposed massing and scale are appropriate, as modified by any proposed conditions, to the site and its surroundings for the following reasons:

- The mass and scale of the proposed 3,285 square-foot, two-story house with an attached two-car garage and rear balconies are appropriate to the site and relate to the surrounding context of one- and two-story homes with the various architectural styles.

- The design presents appropriate proportions and transitions in mass and scale, and it is integrated well into the down-sloped topography and follows the natural terrain.
- The distinction between the stucco colors on the first and second floors, along with the top floor stepping back help blend the new house into the hillside. Furthermore, due to the site topography and the building's location closer to the street, the new house will have a minimal visual impact from the street since only the top floor of the house will be partially visible from the street.
- The mass and scale of the design reinforce the contemporary architectural concept with appropriate proportions and transitions.
- The proposed roof consists of the hipped and gable roofs with 3-feet in 12-feet pitches, which reinforce the design concept. The house will have an overall height of 33'-11" which is less than the maximum allowed 35'-0" height limit in the R1R zone for the houses with pitched roofs of a minimum 3-feet in 12-feet.

Design and Detailing

Are the following items satisfactory and compatible with the project site and surrounding area?

Overall Design and Detailing

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If "no" select from below and explain:

- ☐ Consistent architectural concept
- ☐ Proportions appropriate to project and surrounding neighborhood
- ☐ Appropriate solid/void relationships

Entryway

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If "no" select from below and explain:

- ☐ Well integrated into design
- ☐ Avoids sense of monumentality
- ☐ Design provides appropriate focal point
- ☐ Doors appropriate to design

Windows

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If "no" select from below and explain:

- ☐ Appropriate to overall design
- ☐ Placement appropriate to style
- ☐ Recessed in wall, when appropriate

Privacy

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If "no" select from below and explain:

- ☐ Consideration of views from "public" rooms and balconies/decks
- ☐ Avoid windows facing adjacent windows

Finish Materials and Color

☐ yes ☐ n/a ☒ no

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Textures and colors reinforce design
- ☐ High-quality, especially facing the street
- ☒ Respect articulation and façade hierarchy
- ☒ Wrap corners and terminate appropriately
- ☐ Natural colors appropriate to hillside area

The architectural details and colors of the design reinforce the proposed contemporary architectural concept and meet the intent of the City’s Hillside Design Guidelines. For a better color distinguishment between the first and second floor on the side façades and to appropriately terminate the proposed different stucco colors, a condition of approval is recommended to add a horizontal decorative band between two floors on the side façades.

Paving Materials

☒ yes ☐ n/a ☐ no

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Decorative material at entries/driveways
- ☐ Permeable paving when possible
- ☐ Material and color related to design

Lighting, Equipment, Trash, and Drainage

☐ yes ☐ n/a ☒ no

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Light fixtures appropriately located/avoid spillover and over-lit facades
- ☐ Light fixture design appropriate to project
- ☐ Equipment screened and well located
- ☒ Trash storage out of public view
- ☐ Downspouts appropriately located
- ☐ Vents, utility connections integrated with design, avoid primary facades

A condition of approval is added to relocate the trash bin enclosure to a new location out of public view, and outside of the required street front and interior setback.

Ancillary Structures

☒ yes ☐ n/a ☐ no

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Design consistent with primary structure
- ☐ Design and materials of gates complement primary structure

Determination of Compatibility: Design and Detailing

The proposed design and detailing are appropriate, as modified by any proposed conditions, to the site and its surroundings for the following reasons:

- The architectural details and colors of the design reinforce the proposed contemporary architectural concept and meet the intent of the City's Hillside Design Guidelines. The proposed exterior materials include smooth stucco finish (two off-white colors), stone veneer (wainscot), roof tiles, roof fascia boards, and wrought iron railings. For a better color distinguishment between the first and second floor on the side façades and to appropriately terminate the proposed different stucco colors, a condition of approval is recommended to add a horizontal decorative band between two floors on the side façades.
- The location and design of the front entry and steps are appropriate to the design and reinforce the proposed design concept.
- The proposed fenestration complements the design concept and features recessed brown color fiberglass windows with an appropriate combination of casement and fixed operation with solid wood for exterior sills and trims.
- The proposed house will not create privacy conflicts with the surrounding neighbors since there are no direct views from windows of public rooms and outdoor balconies to neighboring homes on the south and west side. There are also significant distances and landscaping buffers between the proposed house and neighboring homes.
- The location of gutters and downspouts is appropriate to the design. New air-conditioning units are located out of public view. A trash bin enclosure is proposed within the street front and interior setback (south side) while facing the street. A condition of approval is recommended to relocate the trash bin enclosure to a new location, out of public view and outside the required street front and interior setbacks.
- The proposed design and location of the light fixtures are appropriate to the overall design.

Recommendation / Draft Record of Decision

Based on the above analysis, staff recommends **Approval with Conditions**.

1. Update the landscape plan to comply with the Urban Forestry's requirements and obtain an Indigenous Tree Permit and a Street Tree Permit from the Maintenance Services Division (Urban Forestry).
2. Add a horizontal decorative band between two floors on the side façades for a better color distinguishment between the first and second floor and to appropriately terminate the proposed different stucco colors.
3. Relocate the trash bin enclosure to a new location out of public view, and outside of the required 15-foot street front and 10-foot interior setback.

Attachments

1. Project Plans
2. Photos of Existing Property
3. Location Map
4. Neighborhood Survey
5. Indigenous Tree Report prepared by Arsen Margossian, dated January 23, 2023
6. Geotechnical Report, dated June 21, 2024
7. Decision Letter for Variance No. PVAR-001654-2023