



## CITY OF GLENDALE, CA

### DESIGN REVIEW STAFF REPORT – SINGLE FAMILY

**February 22, 2024**

*Decision Date*

**511 Nolan Avenue**

*Address*

**Design Review Board (DRB)**

*Review Type*

**5630-011-033**

*APN*

**PDR-002077-2023**

*Case Number*

**Alen Malekian**

*Applicant*

**Cassandra Pruett**

*Case Planner*

**Alan Khatchatourian**

*Owner*

#### **Project Summary**

The applicant is proposing to construct a 2,149 square-foot (SF), three-story single-family home with an attached two-car garage on a 7,166 SF, vacant, hillside lot in the R1R-II Zone (Restricted Residential Zone, Floor Area Ratio District II).

#### **Environmental Review**

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review as a Class 3 "New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures" per Section 15303(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines because the project involves construction of one single-family residence.

#### **Existing Property/Background**

The subject property is located near the terminus of Nolan Avenue in West Glendale. It is a vacant, double-fronting lot located between Nolan Avenue and Valentine Drive. The site slopes steeply downward from east (Nolan Avenue) to west (Valentine Drive), with an average current slope of 101%.

#### **Staff Recommendation**

Approve with Conditions

---

#### **Last Date Reviewed / Decision**

First time submittal for final review.

#### **Zone: R1R      FAR District: II**

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 Variance (Case Number PVAR-000961-2023) and Administrative Exceptions (Case Number PAE-001142-2023) were approved on June 13, 2023 by the Planning Hearing Officer to construct a 2,149 square-foot (SF), three-story single-family home with an attached two-car garage on a 7,166 SF, vacant, hillside lot in the R1R-II Zone (Restricted Residential Zone, Floor Area Ratio District II) without providing the required 15-foot street front setback (Variance request), with a reduced street front setback (six feet whereas fifteen feet is required), a reduced driveway length (10 feet whereas 18 feet is required), a reduced lot size (7,166 SF whereas 7,500 SF is required), and to exceed the maximum allowed height (32 feet) by four feet (36 feet).

Note: The Variance approval includes the following condition of approval per Public Work Traffic Section's recommendation: 1) Cars parked on the driveway shall not extend into the roadway.

### Site Slope and Grading

50% or greater current average slope: 240 cubic yards (CY) of grading (75 CY fill, 165 CY export).

### 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	8,858 SF	2,740 – 279,655 SF	7,166 SF
Setback	29'	5' – 150'	6'
House size	2,470 SF	1,623 – 5,734 SF	2,149 SF
Floor Area Ratio	28%	2% - 37%	30%
Number of stories	1.9	1 – 3 (3 three-stories, 5 two-stories, 4 one-stories)	3

## 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

The building lacks stepping to follow the topography. Staff recommends applicant explore sloping driveway down to set building into hillside better, reducing floor-to-ceiling heights where possible to reduce building height, considering pulling upper deck in to not extend beyond garage (on both sides) to achieve better stepping (from side and rear views) on 3<sup>rd</sup> level, and/or other means to ensure the building follows the topography.

#### **Garage Location and Driveway**

☒ **yes**    ☐ **n/a**    ☐ **no**

*If “no” select from below and explain:*

- ☐ Predominant pattern on block
- ☐ 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
- ☐ Maintains existing trees when possible
- ☐ Maximizes permeable surfaces
- ☐ Appropriately sized and located

#### **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

### **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 building is located toward the top of the sloped site, close to Nolan Avenue, consistent with other houses on the street.
- The building setbacks are consistent with other houses on the street.
- The building lacks stepping to follow the topography. Recommendations have been provided in the “Building Location” section to increase stepping, and a recommended condition of approval has been added to address this.
- Alteration of existing landform is minimized by outdoor decks being integrated into the building.

- The project features an attached garage at the front, on Nolan Avenue, consistent with the street pattern.
- The driveway features decorative paving.
- The elevations show a decorative material pattern on the retaining walls, but the material has not been called out or included in the material board. A recommended condition is included to add this information to the project.
- Landscaping is featured in front of the lower retaining wall to minimize its visual impact.
- The landscaping plan features a variety of low-water use plants, maintains three existing trees and adds two trees.
- The on-site oak tree is not a protected species and the protected oak tree near the site is over 20 feet away from the property line.

---

### **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
- ☐ Relates to predominant pattern
- ☐ 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

- The building lacks stepping to follow the topography. Recommendations/considerations have been provided in the “Site Planning: Building Location” section to increase stepping.

#### **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

The building does not feature strong variations in roofline, façade planes, and material to help reduce the apparent massing and scale of the building.

### 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 one-story massing with a flat roof, as viewed from Nolan Avenue, is consistent with the street pattern. The three-story massing, as viewed from Valentine Drive, is consistent with other houses on the same side of the street.
- The building does not provide meaningful stepping with the topography. A recommended condition of approval is included to address this.
- The area under the driveway is open, to help reduce apparent massing and scale of the building.
- Alteration of existing landform is minimized by outdoor decks being integrated into the building.
- The building does not feature strong variations in roofline, façade planes, and material to help reduce the apparent massing and scale of the building. A recommended condition of approval is added that this be a stronger feature in the design.

---

### 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

The window pattern appears monotonous. A condition is recommended to address this.

### **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

South elevation lacks material variation. Railings appear monotonous. Staff recommends providing railing variation, for example by varying solid/glass.

### **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
- No gutters/downspouts, or vents/utility connections are shown on the drawings. Staff suggests this be addressed as a condition of approval.

#### **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 design and detailing feature a contemporary style that is consistent across the building.
- The entryway provides an appropriate focal point and is well-proportioned.
- Finish materials are high quality, varied, and wrap corners. Materials include stucco, composite siding with a wood appearance, a wood front door, aluminum and glass garage door, aluminum windows and doors, glass rails, and decorative paving. The color palette is primarily gray.
- Privacy for the neighboring property to the south has been protected to the extent reasonably feasible. There are no windows directly facing neighbors' windows, and for the only two windows facing the neighbor, the distance between windows is over 20 feet. Decks do not wrap the corner facing the neighboring property.
- Trash collection area is located inside the building adjacent the garage.
- No gutters/downspouts, or vents/utility connections are shown on the drawings. A condition is recommended to address this and ensure they are appropriately located.
- The window pattern appears monotonous. A condition is recommended to address this.
- The south elevation lacks material variation, and the railings appear monotonous. Staff recommends providing railing variation, for example by varying solid/glass.
- Box lighting directs lighting vertically and away from adjacent properties.

---

#### **Recommendation / Draft Record of Decision**

Based on the above analysis, staff recommends **Approval with Conditions**. This determination is based on the implementation of the following recommended conditions:

##### **Conditions of Approval**

1. Project to comply with all conditions of approval per Standards Variance (Case Number PVAR-000961-2023) and Administrative Exceptions (Case Number PAE-001142-2023) approved on June 13, 2023.
2. Increase stepping to follow the topography.

3. Increase variation in roofline, façade planes, and material to help reduce the apparent massing and scale of the building.
  4. Increase variation in window pattern to alleviate monotonous appearance.
  5. Increase south elevation material variation, particularly for the railings, for example by varying solid/glass.
  6. Include decorative retaining wall material in elevations and material board.
  7. Show downspouts and gutters appropriately located.
  8. Show vents and utility connections integrated with design and avoiding primary facades.
- 

## **Attachments**

1. Location Map
2. Reduced Plans
3. Photos of Existing Property
4. Neighborhood Survey