



City of Burlingame

BURLINGAME CITY HALL
501 PRIMROSE ROAD
BURLINGAME, CA 94010

Meeting Minutes Planning Commission

Monday, April 24, 2017

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

- b. 1128-1132 Douglas Avenue and 524 Oak Grove Avenue (Dreiling Terrones Architecture, Inc., applicant and architect; Jianguang Zhang, property owner) (307 noticed) Staff Contact: Ruben Hurin

1. Certification of a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR)
2. 1128-1132 Douglas Avenue, zoned R-4: Application for Design Review, Conditional Use Permit for building height, Front Setback Landscape Variance, and Parking Variance for driveway width for a new five-story, 27-unit multi-family residential building with at-grade and below-grade parking.
3. Tentative Parcel Map for Lot Combination for 52 Feet on Douglas Avenue, Portion of Lot 3, Block 5, Map No. 2 of Burlingame Land Co. and 50 Feet on Douglas Avenue, Portion of Lot 3, Block 5, Map No. 2 of Burlingame Land Company.
4. 524 Oak Grove Avenue, zoned R-1: Application for Design Review and Front Setback Variance to demolish the existing house at 524 Oak Grove Avenue and replace it with an existing house to be moved from 1128 Douglas Avenue; the project includes a first and second story addition to the house moved from Douglas Avenue and construction of a new detached garage.

Attachments: [1128-1132 Douglas Ave & 524 Oak Grove Ave - Staff Report](#)
[1128-1132 Douglas Ave & 524 Oak Grove Ave - Attachments](#)
[1128-1132 Douglas Ave & 524 Oak Grove Ave - Final EIR](#)
[1128-1132 Douglas Ave & 524 Oak Grove Ave - Draft EIR](#)
[1128-1132 Douglas Ave & 524 Oak Grove Ave - MMRP](#)
[1128 Douglas Ave - Historical Resource Evaluation](#)
[1132 Douglas Ave - Historical Resource Evaluation](#)
[1128-1132 Douglas Ave - Plans](#)
[524 Oak Grove Ave - Plans](#)
[1128-1132 Douglas Ave - Tentative Parcel Map Memorandum](#)
[1128-1132 Douglas Ave - Tentative Parcel Map](#)

Commissioner Terrones and Commissioner Comaroto indicated that they will recuse themselves from the discussion as they have business relationships with the property owner; they left the City Council Chambers.

All Commissioners had visited the property. There were no ex-parte communications to report.

Commissioner Kelly indicated that he had reviewed all prior materials related to the project.

Senior Planner Keylon gave an overview of the staff report.

Questions of Staff:

There were no Questions of Staff.

Chair Gum opened the public hearing.

Jacob Furlong represented the applicant.

Commission Questions/Comments:

- > Does the circular driveway necessitate the front setback variance due to the location of the tree, not the building? (Furlong: since the building is outside of setback, if going to push circular driveway out of the setback into the middle of the site, this would limit buildable area for the property.)
- > Proposing circular driveway? It does not show on the plans. (Furlong: yes. Pointed out on the plan.)
- > Is the entire front of the property being paved? (Furlong: yes, alternative solutions limit functionality. The two driveways and pedestrian access and anything added triggered a landscape variance.)
- > The EIR addresses protection of the Redwood tree during construction, what will protect tree past construction? (Furlong: proposing an asphalt as opposed to a pervious paver the asphalt profile can be minimal. Will have an arborist involved during the construction process.)
- > Is the tree within the easement? Any thought to protecting from cars going in and out of the driveway? (Furlong: providing a curb on top of asphalt paving; from curb to other side of easement is 9 feet.) Seems really tight. (Driveway has to be maintained regardless of providing parking or not)
- > Drawings of circular driveway are difficult to read. Requested clarification regarding the outline of the circular driveway? (Furlong: showed the location of the driveway.)
- > What problem does the circular driveway solve? (Furlong: delivery vehicles and congestion of visitors.)
- > Landscape drawings not coordinated with plans. Describe what would be within the front of the property if not a circular driveway? (Furlong: lawn area.)
- > Where are there buildings of similar in size or larger? (Furlong: was provided in a presentation from the prior discussion; there are several buildings of similar size in the Downtown neighborhood; provided examples.)

Public Comments:

Linda Taylor: has lived across street for over 10 years. Has listened to many discussions regarding the design of this building. Still does not believe that this building fits in with the Douglas neighborhood. The proposed building would shade an area greater than the existing development. The residential areas in the Burlingame Downtown Specific Plan have a range of building heights. Attention needs to be paid to the massing relative to surrounding development. Should be designed to a residential scale. Does not meet principles and guidelines of Downtown Specific Plan. There is no open space. Doesn't understand why the building could not be narrower. Residents on right side will share parking. What about providing open space for residents? There has been minimal discussion as to how trees will be protected as the historical house will be moved to a new location. Not in favor of the conditional use permit for building height. Please respect the quality of life in the area and scale back the project.

Larry Stevenson: Stated that the setback should be 25.83 feet rather than proposed 19 feet because of the averages on the street. Has surveying info on that. Second, property line to root collar is 3'-9"; doesn't see how a 9 foot driveway can be constructed there. A 7'-9" driveway is not wide enough. The driveway is wider but it is all on his side of the property.

Betsy Vogel: Lives at 500 Almer Rd. Has lived off and on in Burlingame since 1940. The reaction of people to the project was, what is going on in Burlingame? Development is looking like Manhattan. If we

start building like this, we are going to have a city, not a hometown.

Elsa Torres: lives at 512 Primrose Road. When you have 27 units; car will move in and out 6 times a day. The other issues is the narrow driveway. If this variance sets a precedent, anyone who builds in Burlingame will utilize these similar variances. The house at 1128 Douglas will no longer be historic if it is moved to Oak Grove Avenue. How the trees, the telephone wires, the gas lines be affected by the moving of the house? Many people will suffer while this move is taking place.

John Root: he and his wife have lived in Burlingame for many years and at 1133 Douglas for 4 1/2 years. Moved closer to Downtown because of proximity to shopping and transit. Increased activity something we like. The proposed building will be there for long time, everything should be done to ensure that it fits into community best as can and works well for community and neighbors. Believes that building is just too tall, The Downtown Specific Plan allows the height, but it does not fit in this part of the neighborhood. The setback on fifth floor helps but does not fit well with other structure on Douglas. Visitors, drop offs and service personnel block the street on regular basis because there is no off-site parking. Pay close attention to plant material and how it is going to be maintained. Additional number of residences is a significant impact.

Applicant Response to Public Comments:

- > Relocation of the Historic House: the EIR speaks to the process and provides mitigations for impacts. The developer is responsible for expenses of relocation; it will occur during overnight hours to minimize impacts on residents.*
- > Building Height: the City has adopted the Downtown Specific Plan. This neighborhood is largely in transition and very highly desirable place to live. The intention is to increase the diversity of housing stock in Burlingame. Apartments are necessary for affordability to encourage younger people to move into Burlingame.*
- > In response to a Commissioner Inquiry: incentives offered under the density bonus regulations do not benefit the project, the developer is in it for profit and is incurring a significant number of expenses which includes the relocation of the historic property. Developer is investing significant amount of money to develop the project.*

Chair Gum closed the public hearing.

Commission Discussion:

- > What are the benefits for providing below market rate units? (Meeker: incentives such as height increase, deviations from parking standards, relief from any number of development standards)*
- > Has a problem with the height. It would be good looking building on El Camino Real, but the scale is too large for this neighborhood. Buildings directly around or adjacent are typically 3-stories, one 4-story across street.*
- > Has a problem with the variance from driveway width, doesn't see how people will clear the Redwood tree, the tree will be affected.*
- > The site has constraints, too many special considerations, variances. Does not support the project as currently designed.*
- > Hears the concerns of neighbors, It is big change from what is there now. There have been significant changes in the area in the last 15 years. The only thing the Commission can do is look at zoning code that exists. The project is well within height limit with conditional use permit. Much has been done to articulate the building and break up the massing. In comparison to other buildings on the street, it is a really nice building.*
- > In terms of the heights in neighborhood, there is a big mix. There are some buildings that have the feel of a single-family residence, but there are also 4-story buildings. Stepping back the 5th floor is going to make this feel like a 4 story building from the front.*
- > Based on what the community decided on the Downtown Specific Plan, this is what was anticipated. Meets a need for more housing Downtown.*
- > As far as circular driveway variance, has mixed feelings. It is something neighborhood specifically*

asked for – for that reason it is supportable. Is concerned that every application for this type of building will ask for this type of variance. Concerned with setting a precedent.

- > The shared driveway will be there regardless of this project.
- > Overall, the project is supportable.
- > On one hand the building is quite large compared to adjacent structures. Personally, would rather see landscaping versus the circular driveway. Delivery trucks will double-park regardless of whether the circular driveway is provided.
- > If the project were three stories with a stepped back fourth story, could support. Cannot support project as currently designed.
- > This is exactly the type of project that the City needs and what the Downtown Specific Plan envisioned. As to the buildings around it, they will not be there long; the properties will ultimately be redeveloped.
- > The 4-story front is very well scaled to the street; the fifth story setback helps reduce the mass at the front.
- > The Commission's role is to decide whether the project fits or not. Is appropriate for the area and meets the goals and objectives of the Downtown Specific Plan. Feels the circular driveway is a mistake.
- > Supports the project.
- > Very moved by the public comments. Would share neighbors' sentiments if residing on the street. However, am motivated by the policy direction of the Downtown Specific Plan. The dynamic of the Downtown area is going to be denser and higher-scale, more steel or glass and not traditional architecture that the community is accustomed to.
- > The closer you get to Downtown the larger scale makes more sense. Within that area there are multiple 4-story buildings. This is just one story higher than that.
- > I rather go with driveway now and maybe landscape later if not being used.
- > A lot of compromise has happened here. Is in favor of the project.
- > To fit a building on site by variance is backwards. The building should be designed to fit the constraints of the site. The project is not the right size and proportion.
- > It is hypocritical to not include affordable units.
- > Anything built here is going to require the driveway width variance because of the tree and shared easement with neighbor.

Commissioner Sargent made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kelly, to certify the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project. Chair Gum asked for a voice vote, and the motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Loftis, Gum, Sargent, Gaul, and Kelly

Recused: 2 - Terrones, and Comaroto