

**CITY OF BELMONT
MEMORANDUM**



TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Damon DiDonato, Senior Planner

VIA: Carlos de Melo, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: November 16, 2010 Planning Commission Meeting – Agenda Item 5A
708 Alameda de las Pulgas - Review of the Final Landscape Plan
Appl. No. 2009-0022

Summary

Attached please find the revised landscape and retaining wall plan for the proposed construction of a new 2,990 square foot single family residence on a vacant lot located at 708 Alameda de las Pulgas.

The Planning Commission granted Design Review approval for this project at the March 16, 2010 meeting subject to the conditions identified below.

Conditions of Project Approval, Planning Division

- I.A.6 Final retaining wall and planter design shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission, prior to Building Permit issuance. Said design shall include wood walls and/or rough textured stucco or stone walls, in a darker earth-tone color.*
- I.A.8 Final landscape and irrigation plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the Planning Commission, prior to issuance of a building permit. Said plan shall include additional landscaping (including trees), in the front of the retaining wall on the left (southeast) side of the site, with an area with sufficient width for the parking of one vehicle. The surface of the parking space shall be pervious. All plantings shall be California native and drought-tolerant.*

On September 21, 2010, the Planning Commission reviewed a final landscape and retaining wall plan for the subject property. The Commission had no comments on the proposed retaining walls, but continued the project to a date uncertain, identifying concerns about the size and species of the plantings, and the lack of irrigation on the landscape plan (see attached Minutes).

The applicant submitted final landscape plans (see Attachment III) that address the Conditions of Approval as summarized above.

Site conditions

The subject 8,725 square foot property is located on the west side of Alameda de las Pulgas between Arthur and Sharon Avenues. The lot slopes upward from front (east) to rear (west) with an approximate average slope of 34%. The property is undeveloped with the exception of a wood retaining wall located toward the front of the site, an approximately 1,200 square foot patio created by the adjacent property owner for use as outdoor space, and a portion of a circular driveway access to the adjacent property. The patio and a portion of the existing retaining wall, located toward the front of the site, would be removed to allow for the construction of the home. An existing paved portion of right-of-way (outside the roadway) would be resurfaced with pervious concrete as part of the project.

The site is vegetated with various native and non-native shrubs and mature trees. The surrounding single family neighborhood is developed with one and two-story single-family homes with a mixture of stucco and wood exterior finishes.

Landscape /Irrigation Plan

The applicant has provided a revised Landscape /Irrigation plan. This plan indicates retaining the large California native trees on site (with the exception of one eight-inch DBH oak tree), and planting three new trees at the front of the project site (Coast Live Oak, Thread-leaf Japanese Maple, and Crape Myrtle). The landscape plan would also include the planting of a variety of shrubs ground cover and vines (Compact Oregon Grape, Bramble, Catalina Perfume. Kangaroo Paw, New Zealand Flax, and Pink Jasmine) in planters and along both sides of the driveway access.

The proposed plant species includes one California native tree, and two California native shrubs. All proposed plantings are drought tolerant and deer resistant, with the exception of Pink Jasmine, which uses a moderate amount of water. The applicant has retained the services of a Landscape Architect who has provided a “Plant Rationale,” and an expanded planting palette with additional column entries (i.e., CA Native, Drought Tolerance, Deer Resistance, and Size at Maturity), as requested by staff.

Staff would note that existing California native landscaping would provide a backdrop for the home and assist in mitigating the bulk of the proposed residence as seen from the sides. Staff believes that the new proposed plantings within the planters along the front of the home are well located and would assist in softening the home as seen from the street. The proposed tree locations would appear appropriate to screen bulk given that the larger tree species (Coast Live Oak) would be located lower on the slope and the smaller tree species (Crape Myrtle) would be closer to the home. However, staff would recommend that a columnar shaped tree be used on the right side of the driveway to assist in screening the home as seen from the north. Staff would recommend that a fern pine be used in this location as it is fast growing, drought tolerant and capable of thriving in narrow locations. Thus, staff is recommending a condition that the applicant amend the landscape plan to include the additional planting. Staff recommends that the final landscape plan would be reviewed and approved by staff, and that all required landscaping would be installed prior to final building permit inspection.

Retaining Wall Plan

The applicant's previously reviewed retaining wall plans included maintaining the existing wood retaining wall at the front of the site, and using rough textured, concrete stone blocks for new retaining wall and planters. The new retaining walls would be predominately tan and gray in color. Stone pavers are proposed for the driveway surface and decomposed granite is proposed for the parking pad. At the September 21,, 2010 meeting, the Planning Commission had no comments and voiced no concerns regarding the retaining wall plan. Staff believes that the proposed retaining wall plan is consistent with the Section 9-47 (*Retaining Wall Design*) of the Municipal Code, which requires that all retaining walls visible from the public right-of-way shall be of a design to conform to the natural setting and surroundings.

Recommendation

As indicated above, staff finds that the previously reviewed retaining wall plan is acceptable and consistent with the findings of Section 9-47 of the Municipal Code. In addition, staff finds the revised landscape plan, as proposed and conditioned, would assist in mitigating the bulk of the home as seen from the street. Therefore, staff recommends the Commission approve the landscape plan, as proposed and conditioned.

Attachments

- I. Resolution Approving the Landscape Plan
- II. Planning Commission Meeting minutes, date September 21, 2010
- III. Landscape and Retaining Plans and materials (Commission only)

RESOLUTION NO. 2010 -_____

RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF BELMONT
APPROVING THE FINAL LANDSCAPE PLAN FOR 708 ALAMEDA DE LAS PULGAS
(APPL. NO. 2009-0022)

WHEREAS, Bahram Mozayeny, property owner, requests approval of a Final Landscape Plans in conjunction with Design Review to construct a 2,990 square-foot single-family residence located on 708 Alameda de las Pulgas, as required by Conditions I.A.6 and I.A.8 of Planning Commission Resolution 2010-07; and,

WHEREAS public meetings were held on March 16, 2010, September 21, 2010, and November 16, 2010; and,

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission hereby adopts the staff memorandum dated November 16, 2010 and the facts contained therein as its own findings of facts;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that approval of the Final Landscape Plan is subject to the additional Condition of Approval as follows:

- *The applicant shall amend the landscape plan to include an additional tree planting on the left side of the driveway. The final landscape plan shall be reviewed and approved by staff, and all required landscaping shall be installed prior to final building permit inspection.*

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Commission approves the Final Landscape Plan and Retaining Wall Plan in association with the Design Review Permit granted for 708 Alameda de Las Pulgas, as proposed and conditioned.

* * * * *

Passed and adopted at a regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Belmont held on November 16, 2010 by the following vote:

AYES,

COMMISSIONERS:_____

NOES,

COMMISSIONERS:_____

ABSENT,

COMMISSIONERS:_____

ABSTAIN,

COMMISSIONERS:_____

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RECUSED,

COMMISSIONERS: _____

Carlos de Melo

Planning Commission Secretary