



PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

1000 San Pablo Avenue

Albany, CA 94706

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2023

REGULAR MEETING: 7:00 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner MacLeod called the regular meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission to order at 7:05 p.m. on Wednesday, March 22, 2023.

2. ROLL CALL / LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Present: Hudson, MacLeod, Momin, Pilch (arrived at 7:07 p.m.), Watty

Absent:

Staff Present: Community Development Director Jeff Bond

The Albany Land Acknowledgement Statement was read as adopted by the City Council per City of Albany Minute Action, November 15, 2021.

3. EX-PARTE COMMUNICATIONS

None.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

4-1. Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes February 22, 2023

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission review and approve the meeting minutes.

Motion to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2023 meeting as proposed.

Watty

Seconded by MacLeod

AYES: Hudson, MacLeod, Momin, Pilch, Watty

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion passed, 5-0-0-0

4-2. Planning Application 23-012 Major Use Permit Approval for a Wine Retail and Tasting Shop at 901 San Pablo

– The applicant is seeking major conditional use permit approval for a proposed natural wine bottle shop and tasting room at 901 San Pablo Avenue. The subject property is 6,048-sq.-ft. lot with an existing 5,974-sq.-ft. retail building with ancillary kitchen and storage space. The proposed business will occupy 1,604 sq. ft. of the existing building with no major tenant improvements proposed for the interior or exterior. A conditional use permit



PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

1000 San Pablo Avenue

Albany, CA 94706

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

approval is being sought for onsite alcohol sales and consumption, limited to wine and beer. Off-street parking is not required per California Assembly Bill 2097.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission review and approve the proposed project subject to the attached findings and Conditions of Approval.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): The project is Categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15303 "New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures" of the CEQA Guidelines.

When asked, **Sean Danzeiser**, applicant, reported he will lease the space at 901 San Pablo. The three retail spaces are not connected.

Motion to approve Planning Application 23-012 for 901 San Pablo Avenue.

Watty

Seconded by MacLeod

AYES: Hudson, MacLeod, Momin, Pilch, Watty

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion passed, 5-0-0-0

Commissioner Pilch noted the appeal period.

- 4-3. Planning Application 23-008 Design Review for a Second-Story Addition and Remodel at 926 Cornell Avenue** – The applicant is seeking Design Review approval for a first- and second-story addition at 926 Cornell Avenue. The subject property is a 5,000-sq.-ft. lot with an existing 3-bedroom, 1.5-bathroom, 1,434-sq.-ft. home built in 1927. The scope of work includes a 136-sq.-ft. addition on the main floor and an 887-sq.-ft. second-story addition to accommodate an expanded kitchen, living, and family room space on the main floor and larger bedrooms, two bathrooms, and an office on the second floor. The architectural style of the house will remain, with the Mediterranean style continued through the second story with painted stucco and roof material to match the existing home. This will result in a 4-bedroom, 3-bathroom, 2,510-sq.-ft. home with a maximum height of 23'-4". Off-street parking is not required per California Assembly Bill 2097.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission review and approve the proposed project subject to the attached findings and Conditions of Approval.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): The project is Categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15303 "New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures" of the CEQA Guidelines.



PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

1000 San Pablo Avenue

Albany, CA 94706

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

Commissioner MacLeod expressed concern that the elevations are blank such that the house appears big and boxy, especially the middle and back elevations. The elevations seem to be mislabeled. There could be more relief or better articulation of the facades. In the front, the room above the garage could be lower. The architecture could be better. Privacy and light are not concerns.

Commissioner Hudson noted the vertical expansion will intrude on the neighbor's light and privacy and the inability to please both the homeowners and the neighbor.

Commissioner Watty indicated that the Planning & Zoning Commission (Commission) routinely approves second-story additions adjacent to one-story homes. An appropriate side setback separates the two homes. The height of the proposed structure will be within the City's height limits. The design could be better by stacking the vertical addition over the original house, but the addition as proposed complies with design guidelines. The front facade is appropriately detailed with windows and articulation.

Commissioner Momin did not find the design lacking. The front facade is well composed. The garage and new addition are set back and will not heavily affect the neighbor's access to light. Many Mission Revival houses have a stucco finish that is blank with small openings.

Commissioner Pilch preferred the front roofline of the proposed addition match the existing roofline.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

None.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

Motion to approve the Planning Application 23-008 for 926 Cornell Avenue.

Watty

Seconded by Momin

AYES: Hudson, Momin, Pilch, Watty

NOES: MacLeod

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion passed, 4-1-0-0

Commissioner Pilch noted the appeal period.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS / COMMUNICATIONS

Community Development Director Bond advised that the Housing Element is still under review. The City Council authorized staff to send the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan for



PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

1000 San Pablo Avenue

Albany, CA 94706

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

review by the California Office of Emergency Services. Staff anticipates only one Commission meeting in April 2023.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

7. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

7-1. Planning Application 22-070 Design Review and Parking Exception Approval for Addition and Remodel at 1000 Ventura – The applicant is seeking Design Review approval for a first- and second-story addition and a parking exception for parking within the front yard setback at 1000 Ventura Avenue. The subject property is a 3,181-sq.-ft. lot with an existing 2-bedroom, 1-bathroom, 1,178-sq.-ft. house built in 1937. The scope of work includes a 571-sq.-ft. addition split between the lower/basement level and main level to accommodate larger and reconfigured living, dining, kitchen, and main bedroom spaces on the main floor as well as two bedrooms and a recreation room on the lower/basement level. The project proposes a minor retaining wall along the north-facing property line. The architectural style of the home is proposed to remain, with changes to windows along all facades. This will result in a 3-bedroom, 2.5-bathroom, 1,749-sq.-ft. home with a maximum height of 18'-6".

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission review and approve the proposed project subject to the attached findings and Conditions of Approval.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): The project is Categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15303 "New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures" of the CEQA Guidelines.

Community Development Director Bond presented the staff report dated March 22, 2023. Staff received additional materials after they prepared the staff report and recommendation.

Kaileen Yen, applicant, reported the basement and sunken patio will be excavated. The side yards will remain substantially the same. The existing basement will be removed and another built with an additional 3-4 feet of floor-to-ceiling height. There will probably be a backup system to pump storm drainage to the street. A stucco finish, standing seam roof at the front porch, shingles at the rear, and thermally broken aluminum windows are proposed for the project.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED



PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

1000 San Pablo Avenue

Albany, CA 94706

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

1 **Simon and Sadika Hara**, property owners, explained their need to enlarge the house to
2 accommodate their family.

3
4 PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

5
6 Commissioner Watty felt the project is designed handsomely and a good way to adapt a
7 home for the next generation. The height and massing of the proposed building do not
8 affect the street any more than the existing building. The project vastly improves the
9 proportions and architecture of the existing building.

10
11 Commissioner Momin agreed with Commissioner Watty's comments. The proposed
12 window articulation is plain in comparison to the original articulation. Casements or
13 divisions would better complement the existing architecture.

14
15 Commissioner MacLeod liked the project and the garage conversion. The front parking
16 space will be a little tight for a larger vehicle. Excavating the basement is risky in terms of
17 water intrusion. Retaining the basement walls closest to the street makes it harder to
18 waterproof that edge. The windows could be higher or skylights could be added to
19 animate the tall space. The big kitchen and doors to the rear are terrific.

20
21 Commissioner Pilch concurred with comments regarding the windows and drainage.
22 French drains may be an alternative to a pump system.

23
24 **Motion to approve Planning Application 22-070** for 1000 Ventura Avenue.

25 Watty

26 Seconded by Momin

27 AYES: Hudson, MacLeod, Momin, Pilch, Watty

28 NOES:

29 ABSTAIN:

30 ABSENT:

31 **Motion passed, 5-0-0-0**

32
33 Commissioner Pilch noted the appeal period.

34
35 **7-2. Planning Application 23-009 Design Review for First-Floor Addition and**
36 **Major Remodel at 520 Pomona Avenue** – The applicant is seeking Design
37 Review approval for an addition and remodel at 520 Pomona Avenue. The subject
38 property is a 3,300-sq.-ft. lot with an existing 3-bedroom, 2-bathroom, 1,857-sq.-ft.
39 home built in 1929. The scope of work includes a 214-sq.-ft. first-floor enclosed
40 addition to accommodate expanded living, dining, and kitchen areas, a new
41 enclosed garage, and reorientation of the front entry. The second story will be
42 reconfigured to accommodate three bedrooms and 2 bathrooms as well as an
43 office. An attached accessory dwelling unit is being processed concurrently with
44 the minor addition and is not subject to public review per California law. The
45 proposed scope of work would change the existing Mediterranean style to modern
46 farmhouse with cement board-and-batten siding and asphalt roofing. This will



PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

1000 San Pablo Avenue

Albany, CA 94706

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

1 result in a 4-bedroom, 3-bathroom, 1,812-sq.-ft. home with a maximum height of
2 23'-7". Off-street parking is not required per California Assembly Bill 2097.

3
4 **Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission
5 review and approve the proposed project subject to the attached findings and
6 Conditions of Approval.

7
8 **CEQA:** The project is Categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15303
9 "New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures" of the CEQA Guidelines.

10
11 Community Development Director Bond presented the staff report dated March 22, 2023.

12
13 **Ailin Li**, property owner, reported the siding will be similar to that on the home at 1152
14 Portland Avenue. The upper half of the home will have vertical siding but no horizontal
15 siding on the lower half. The color has not been determined.

16
17 PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

18
19 None.

20
21 PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

22
23 Commissioner Hudson advised that the proposed facade is not compatible with other
24 homes in the neighborhood.

25
26 Commissioner Momin indicated that the proposed plan is efficient compared to the
27 original house. The proposed architectural style is not an improvement over the original
28 as it appears as a simple box. The project does not have an architectural language,
29 articulation, a well-defined entry, or changes in plane or mass.

30
31 Commissioner Watty noted elements used in the home at 1152 Portland Avenue could
32 make the proposed project more compatible with the neighborhood. A prominent
33 entryway is a critical part of the residential guidelines. The overall massing and roof form
34 is appropriate, but the articulation and entryway could be improved.

35
36 Commissioner MacLeod believed the project would have benefited from a better
37 rendering of the facades. The language of the proposed entryway does not fit together.
38 Some elements of the project are promising. The floor plan is fine. The project seems to
39 be lower and more compact than the original house. The overall look of the project is
40 acceptable, but the front could be articulated better.

41
42 Commissioner Pilch noted the loss of architectural features between the original and
43 proposed houses. Articulation of the front facade would be an improvement. The project
44 does not comply with exceptional design guidelines.



PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

1000 San Pablo Avenue

Albany, CA 94706

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

Motion to continue Planning Application 23-009 for 520 Pomona Avenue.

Watty

Seconded by MacLeod

AYES: Hudson, MacLeod, Momin, Pilch, Watty

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion passed, 5-0-0-0

8. NEW BUSINESS

None.

9. NEXT MEETING: April 12, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Community Development Director Bond reported the April 12 meeting may be canceled.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Submitted by: _____

Jeff Bond, Community Development Director