

*City of Albany*  
**Planning and Zoning Commission**  
**Staff Report**

**Agenda Item:** #6c

**Meeting Date:** September 27, 2005

**Subject:** **Planning Application 05-037. Design Review.** A request for Design Review approval to allow a two-story addition of 981 square feet at the rear of an existing one-story, 450 square foot residence.

**Location:** **824 Ramona Avenue**

**Applicant/  
Owner:** Y.M. Chung for  
Ava Ng

**Zoning:** **R-1, Residential Low Density Single-Family**

**Surrounding  
Property Use** North - SFD East - SFD  
South - SFD West - SFD

**Attachments:** A. June 28, 2005 P&Z Staff Report  
B. Minutes of June 28, 2005 P&Z Meeting  
C. Previous Project Plans  
D. Revised Project Plans

**Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Planning and Zoning Commission review the proposed design in comparison with the previous design and the Commission's direction given at the previous meeting. If the Commission is of the belief that the revised design adequately addresses their direction, staff would recommend that the Commission approve the Design Review request for a 981 square foot first and second-story addition, subject to the attached findings and conditions of approval.

**Background**

The Planning and Zoning Commission originally heard this application on June 28, 2005. At that hearing, the Commission gave general comments regarding a preference toward moving part or all of the addition towards the front of the existing house. The Commission also asked for a detail of the window recess and a landscaping plan. The applicant has resubmitted drawings that attempt to address these concerns

**Project Description**

The existing house at 824 Ramona is a 450 square foot, one-story residence on a 2,500 square foot lot. The applicant is proposing to build a 981 square foot, two-story addition at the rear of the existing house, resulting in a total area of 1,431 square feet. The total building height would increase from 15 feet to 24 feet 6 inches. Two off-street parking spaces are proposed to be located in the rear and side yards on the south side of the property.

**Primary Revisions to previously submitted drawings**

- The total height of the building has been reduced by 1 foot. As shown on the North Elevation (Sheet A-3), this would reduce the maximum height of the building as measured from original grade to approximately 24 feet 5 inches (previously proposed at 25 feet 5 inches).
- The length of the addition has been reduced by 3 feet, resulting in a rear yard setback of 23 feet 2 inches (previously proposed at 20 feet 2 inches).
- The first- and second-story decks proposed on the rear elevation have been redesigned, resulting in the second-story deck being replaced by a shallow planter box off of the rear. The basic appearance of the rear elevation has not been altered by this change.
- An additional stucco reveal, with a planting trellis, has been introduced on the second story of the north side elevation to give more visual relief.
- The architect has shown on the building elevations how vegetation and landscaping can be situated (Sheet A-3).

**Site Analysis**

The table below indicates existing and proposed site conditions.

	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Requirement</b>
Setbacks			
Front (east)	14'-5.5"	No change	15'
Side (north)	9"	3' (addition)	3'
Side (south)	7'-4.5"	5'-4.5"	3'
Rear (west)	59'-1"	23'	20'
Area			
Lot Size	2,500 sq. ft.	--	--
Floor Area			
First Floor	450 sq. ft.	959 sq. ft.	--
Second Floor	n/a	535 sq. ft.	
Total Counted	450 sq. ft.	1,494 sq. ft.	--
Floor Area Ratio	18%	59.7%	60%
Lot Coverage	18%	38.4 %	50%
Rear Yard Coverage	0%	0%	30% max.
Maximum Height	15'	26'	28' max.

As shown in the table above, the existing house has non-conforming front (east) and side (north) yards. The proposed addition would meet all setback requirements and not increase any of the existing non-conforming setbacks.

**Design Review Analysis**

To approve the Design Review request, the Planning and Zoning Commission must make the findings contained in Section 20.100.050.E of the Albany Municipal Code and determine the proposal otherwise conforms to the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and intent of the City's Residential Design Guidelines.

To address the Commissions previously stated concerns, the applicant has made alterations to the submitted plans. The two primary alterations were to reduce the height of the building by approximately 1 foot, resulting in a maximum total height of 24 feet 5 inches from adjacent grade, and increasing the rear yard setback by 3 feet, to 23 feet 2 inches. The architect has also revised the rear elevation by removing the second floor deck and replacing it with a planter box off of the rear. Additional revisions made to the drawings include a specific revision corresponding to Commissioner Donaldson's request for reference to proposed trees and vines that could soften the impact of the addition. The architect is continuing not to propose any portion of the addition over the existing house in an attempt to limit the construction impact to the existing house.

As stated in the previous staff report, the design of the addition has been strongly influenced by the narrowness of the lot, which is only 25 feet in width, and the fact that there is an existing driveway on the south side of the lot. With these constraints, the widest portion of the new addition on the second floor will be 15 feet 6 inches, while the narrowest portion of the addition on the ground floor will only be 11 feet 2 inches alongside the area where parking is proposed.

The architect has attempted to give visual interest to the design with the interplay of different horizontal building planes. The front elevation has not been revised from the previous submittal, and continues to reflect the existing stepped parapet wall, and also includes two bay windows and a trellis over the center bay window that mimics the existing trellis over the front entry.

The only change to the south elevation is due to the alteration of the two-story deck on the rear of the addition. The second story portion of the deck has been removed, and therefore the south side elevation appears shorter. With this change to the deck on the rear, staff's concern regarding the deck projecting into the required rear yard setback is no longer applicable. The change to the deck does not significantly alter the appearance of the rear elevation, which continues to be visually interesting.

The architect has attempted to improve the north elevation by introducing a second stucco reveal on the northwest corner of the building, reflecting the same proposed feature to the east on the second floor. These reveals include shallow trellises that would allow for vegetation on the upper portions of this elevation. The more visually interesting window detail continues to be proposed on this and all other elevations.

Staff is aware that the applicant has not moved any portion of the new addition forward over the existing dwelling, which the Commission requested be studied at the previous meeting. As stated in the previous staff report, staff is of the opinion that the proposed addition is well

designed when the existing site constraints (narrow lot, providing conforming parking) are taken into account. Staff believes that the revised design appropriately mitigates the other concerns as stated by the Commission, and improves the overall design. Staff believes that the addition as designed is consistent with the City's Residential Design Guidelines and recommends that the Commission can make the required findings for approval of the Design Review request, subject to the conditions of approval.

### **Parking**

Section 20.28 of the Albany Municipal Code regulates off-street parking. Specifically, Sections 20.28.020.A.1 and 20.28.040.A.1 together state that when a single-family residence is expanded by more than 240 square feet, two regulation sized off-street parking spaces be provided or the Commission adopt one or more of the circumstances in Section 20.28.040.A.2 to reduce the number of required spaces. If one or more of the spaces is located in a front yard area, the Commission must make the findings at Section 20.28.040.A.5.

If the Planning and Zoning Commission determines that the Design Review Application can be approved, the code appears to provide an order of preference of the type and location of off-street space (listed below in order of apparent preference by the Code):

1. Two spaces in a garage, rear- or side-yard parking area;
2. One garage, rear- or side-yard space; a second space in the front yard area;
3. Zero or one garage, rear- or side-yard parking space; first or second parking space not possible in any yard area.

If an addition project does not include two off-street parking spaces, the Planning and Zoning Commission will typically have three alternatives:

1. Deny the application for the residential addition;
2. Approve the application with an exception to allow parking within a required yard area;  
or
3. Approve the application with a reduction in the number of required spaces.

### *Analysis:*

The applicants are proposing that the first required parking space be provided in the rear yard. The second required parking space would be provided in the side yard tandem to the rear yard space. The side yard where the parking is proposed has a width of 10 feet 6 inches, which meets the minimum width requirement. Therefore the parking as proposed will conform to the ordinance requirements.

### **Environmental Analysis**

Staff has determined that the proposed project is categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA per Section 15301(e) of the CEQA Guidelines.

### **Findings**

The following findings have been drafted to assist the Planning and Zoning Commission in making a determination to approve or disapprove this application. The findings are for information only and should be revised accordingly based on information presented at the public hearing

**Findings for Design Review approval**

*Section 20.100.050.E, applicable to all projects:*

1. *The project conforms to the General Plan, any applicable specific plan, applicable design guidelines adopted by the City of Albany, and all applicable provisions of this Chapter. The General Plan designates this area for residential development. Additionally, the project meets City zoning standards for location, intensity and type of development.*
2. *Approval of project design is consistent with the purpose and intent of this section, which states "designs of projects...will result in improvements that are visually and functionally appropriate to their site conditions and harmonious with their surroundings, including natural landforms and vegetation. Additional purposes of design review include (but are not limited to): that retention and maintenance of existing buildings and landscape features are considered; and that site access and vehicular parking are sufficient." The proposal is in scale and harmony with existing development near the site. The architecture is consistent with the existing dwelling and with the City's Residential Design Guidelines. The proposed project will provide safe and convenient access to the property for both vehicles and pedestrians. The project will not remove any significant vegetation and will not require significant grading. The project will not create a visual detriment at the site or the neighborhood.*
3. *Approval of the project is in the interest of public health, safety and general welfare. The proposed project will not be detrimental to the health, safety, convenience and welfare of those in the area and would not adversely impact property, improvements or potential future development in the area.*
4. *The project is in substantial compliance with applicable general and specific Standards for Review stated in Subsection 20.100.050.D. The project, as designed, is in substantial compliance with the standards as stated, including access, architecture, natural features, coordination of design details, retention and maintenance of buildings, and protection of privacy.*

**Conditions of Approval**

A. GENERAL

- A-1. This Design Review approval is for adding a 981 square foot first and second story addition to the house at 824 Ramona Avenue, as substantially shown on the project drawings, except as may be modified by conditions herein. Revised plans include a site plan/building elevation/floor plans prepared by Y.M. Chung, architect, dated received September 16, 2005, and presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission at its meeting of September 27, 2005.

A-2. The applicants shall pay any and all City and other related fees applicable to the property. Fees shall be based on the current fee structure in effect at the time the relevant permits are secured, and shall be paid prior to issuance of said permit or prior to any City Council final action approval. Notice shall be taken specifically of Plan Check and Inspection Fees

A-3. Before the issuance of grading or building permits, the applicants shall submit written documentation that all requirements of the Albany Fire Department, as stated in the memo dated June 2, 2005, have or will be met to the satisfaction of the AFD.

A-4. Before the issuance of grading or building permits, the applicants shall submit written documentation that all requirements of the Public Works Department have or will be met to the satisfaction of the City Engineer.

A-5. Construction activity shall be restricted to the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays, and 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Sundays and legal holidays, unless otherwise approved in writing by the City Engineer for general construction activity.

A-6. In the event subsurface archeological remains are discovered during any construction or pre-construction activities on the site, all land alteration work within 100 feet of the find shall be halted, the Community Development Department notified, and a professional archeologist, certified by the Society of California Archeology and/or the Society of Professional Archeology, shall be notified. Site work in this area shall not occur until the archeologist has had an opportunity to evaluate the significance of the find and to outline appropriate mitigation measures, if deemed necessary. If prehistoric archeological deposits are discovered during development of the site, local Native American organizations shall be consulted and involved in making resource management decisions.

B. SITE PLANNING

B-1. All exterior lighting shall be installed in such a manner that glare is directed away from surrounding properties and rights-of-way.

C. LANDSCAPING

C-1. All existing trees on the site shall be preserved to the fullest extent practicable. Removal will be allowed only upon prior written approval from the Planning Division.

D. ARCHITECTURE

- D-1. Samples of final exterior materials and the proposed color palette shall be submitted for review and approval by the Planning Division prior to issuance of building permits for the project.
- D-2. The applicants shall submit final architectural elevations, details and revisions for the review and approval of the Planning Division before issuance of building permits. The revised plans shall show that the roof over the second story deck on the rear elevation has been removed.
- D-3. All new windows shall be recessed two inches from face of building to provide adequate shade and shadow and to promote visual relief. Alternate architectural treatments may be acceptable in lieu of a two-inch recess. Such alternative treatments are subject to review by the staff. Final window details shall be submitted for review and approval at the time of building permit application.
- E. PARKING
- No special conditions.
- F. GRADING
- F-1. Any grading required in association with the project shall require a grading permit from the Community Development Department. To obtain this permit, the applicants shall submit a grading plan, indicating the extent and volumes of earth proposed to be moved.
- G. STREETS
- G-1. The applicants shall obtain an encroachment permit from the Engineering Division prior to commencing any construction activities within any public right-of-way or easement.
- G-2. All mud, dirt or construction debris carried off the construction site onto adjacent streets shall be removed each day. No materials shall be discharged onto a sidewalk, street, gutter, storm drain or creek.
- G-3. Any damage to street improvements now existing or done during construction on or adjacent to the subject property shall be repaired to the satisfaction of the City Engineer at the full expense of the applicants. This shall include sidewalk repair, slurry seal, street reconstruction or others, as may be required by the City Engineer.
- G-4. All improvements within the public right-of-way, including curb, gutter, sidewalks, driveways, paving and utilities, shall be reconstructed in accordance

with approved standards and/or plans and shall comply with the standard plans and specification of the Community Development Department and Chapter 14 of the City Code.

H. INFRASTRUCTURE

H-1. The existing sewer system for the subject building shall be brought into compliance with Chapter 15 of the Albany City Code and to the satisfaction of the Maintenance and Engineering Division.

H-2. All runoff from impervious surfaces shall be intercepted at the project boundary and shall be collected and conducted via an approved drainage system through the project site to an approved storm drain facility, as determined by the City Engineer. Development that contributes additional water to the existing drainage system shall be required to complete a hydraulic study and make improvements to the system as required to accommodate the expected ultimate peak water flow and to stabilize erosive banks that could be impacted by additional storm water flow.

H-3. Prior to the issuance of any Building Permits, the applicants shall provide a drainage plan showing existing and proposed drainage for the project, including areas drained and the flow patterns (e.g., sheet flow off roof, downspouts). Show the area draining to each downspout and details of both existing and proposed downspouts, including construction at and near grade (e.g., bends in downspouts, splash blocks). Demonstrate that drainage quantity, concentration, and direction will remain unchanged. If not unchanged, roof drainage from the structure shall be collected via a closed minimum 3 inch pipe and conveyed to an approved storm drain system off the street curb unless otherwise approved by the City Engineer. No concentrated drainage of surface flow across sidewalks shall be permitted.

I. MISCELLANEOUS

I-1. The project shall be constructed as approved. Planning staff may approve minor modifications in the project design, but not the use. Any other change shall require further Planning and Zoning Commission approval through the Design Review process.

I-2. Pursuant to Government Code Section 66474.9, the applicants (including any agent thereof) shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless, the City of Albany and its agents, officers and employees, from any claim, action, or proceeding against the City or its agents, officers or employees to attack, set aside, void, or annul the City's approval concerning this application, which action is brought within the time period provide for in Section 66499.37. The City will promptly



notify the applicants of any such claim action or proceeding and cooperate fully in the defense.

J. SPECIAL CONDITIONS

- J-1. This Design Review approval shall expire at the close of business on October 11, 2006, (one year from the date on which this approval becomes effective) unless, before expiration of one year, a Building Permit is issued and construction commenced or completed. The design review approval may be renewed by the Community Development Director for a period up to an additional two (2) years, provided that, at least ten (10) days prior to October 11, 2006, an application for renewal of the approval is filed with the Community Development Department.

**Appeals:** The Albany Municipal Code provides that any action of the Planning and Zoning Commission may be appealed to the City Council if such appeal is filed within 14 days of the date of action. Appeals may be filed in the Community Development Department by completing the required form and paying the required fee. The City Clerk will then schedule the matter for the next available City Council meeting.