

**CITY OF ALBANY
PLANNING AND ZONING AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda date: 2/10/09
Prepared by: AC
Reviewed by: JB

ITEM/ 6c

SUBJECT: **Amendment to approval of Planning Application 04-042.** Request to revise the conditions of approval requiring that utilities be underground, and a request to allow window materials to change from aluminum to vinyl.

SITE: **528 Madison (Madison Street north of Clay Street; Parcel Number 66-2758-77)**

APPLICANT/

OWNER: **Willie Tang and Anne Hsu, owners**

ZONING: **Hillside Development District**

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning and Zoning Commission maintain Condition of Approval H-11 as originally approved regarding underground utilities and approve modification to the approved plans to allow change in window material.

BACKGROUND/PROJECT DESCRIPTION

528 Madison is a hillside lot adjacent to two recently constructed homes to the south at 530 and 532 Madison and a longtime developed lot to the north at 524 Madison. In 2003 the vacant lots at 528, 530, and 532 received design review approval to construct single-family homes. The lots at 530 and 532 Madison completed construction in 2007. The applicant, at 528 Madison received design review approval on June 28, 2005 for a revised design of a single-family home. The subject property was issued a building permit in December 2007 and the home has since been graded, and the foundation has been laid.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

A Mitigated Negative Declaration was approved for the property, in 2005 when it was approved.

DISCUSSION OF KEY ISSUES

The home at 528 Madison is currently under construction. As a condition of approval of this home (Condition H-11) , and the adjacent two homes (530 and 532 Madison), utilities must be routed underground to the home from utility poles across the street. The applicant is requesting

that the requirement to underground the utilities be modified, and that standard above ground service drops from the existing utility lines be allowed. The applicant also has offered to enter into a Deferred Improvement Agreement that would require the property owner to pay their share of the cost if in the future utilities on Madison are placed underground.

The other two homes in the original approval are completed and complied with the underground requirement. PG&E's installation of underground electrical service to these homes, however, did not anticipate additional service to the subject property. Thus, in order to comply with the conditions of approval, the applicant would be required remove and replace the sidewalk in front of neighboring homes to reach existing underground vaults on the west side of the street. In addition, depending on PG&E's decision regarding routing of the power service, upgrade to vaults themselves and conduits from the vaults to the utility poles on the east side of the street may also be required.

Currently there are utility poles and lines on the east side of the street that serve the homes of the east side. The homes on the remainder of Madison Street to the south receive utilities by above-ground service drops from this line. If the applicant's request is approved, that would be an additional service drop running across the street. The utilities to the applicant would be served from existing poles or from a splice in the existing lines, and thus no additional poles would be required to serve the home.

In general, staff supports the undergrounding of utilities both for aesthetic and long term maintenance reasons. Overall, the addition of one additional service drop across Madison would not have a major aesthetic impact on the streetscape, nor would it significantly change maintenance responsibilities and issues. Normally, these kinds of issues would be better addressed at the time of the original approval, but at that time, the applicant was unaware of the technical issues with PG&E.

In regards to changing the window materials, the applicant has provided cutsheets for both aluminum and vinyl windows (see attachment 4). Staff believes that with the contemporary style of the home that either would be a suitable material, thus recommends approval of the proposed window change. Staff, however, recommends that the Commission provide direction on whether the white or desert sand are the appropriate color for the home.

Attachments:

1. Approved project plan
2. Photos
3. Information from applicant
4. Window materials detail