



## DESIGN REVIEW BOARD RECORD OF DECISION

**Meeting Date**      February 9, 2023      **DRB Case No.**      PDR 2113521-B

**Address**      1766 Cielito Drive

**Applicant**      Aram Alajajian

### Project Summary:

The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing 1-story, 3,246 square-foot (SF) single-family dwelling with attached, 2-car garage (originally built in 1961) and to construct a new 2-story, 4,855 square-foot single-family dwelling with an attached, subterranean, three-car garage on a 23,620 square-foot, double-frontage lot located in the R1R (FAR District II) Zone. This is a second submittal for Final Review; on May 26, 2022, the DRB voted to "Return for Redesign".

### Design Review:

Board Member	Motion	Second	Yes	No	Absent	Abstain
Kaskanian		X	X			
Lockareff				X		
Simonian	X		X			
Tchaghayan			X			
Welch				X		
Totals			3	2		
<b>DRB Decision</b>		Approve with conditions and one consideration.				

### Conditions:

1. Reduce the proposed livable area by at least 15% from the originally proposed 5,337 square-feet.
2. Reinstate the original design concept presented at the May 26, 2022, DRB hearing, reflecting the conditions of approval.

3. Step back the façade of the primary bedroom/bath at the second floor so that it is placed further back from the first-floor façade below.
4. Reduce the width of the driveway entrance in the front setback to minimize the amount of hardscape.
5. Reduce the size of the south deck, removing the sawtooth form in this area and allowing for the continuation of the corresponding retaining wall.

**Consideration:**

1. That the overall building height be reduced by reducing the floor-to-floor heights at the first and second floors.

**Determination of Compatibility: Site Planning**

The proposed site planning is appropriate to the site and its surroundings for the following reasons:

- The proposed site planning addresses various zoning regulations, including the 20'-0" special street-front setback, parking, lot coverage, and landscaping.
- Based on the DRB conditions from the first hearing, the size of the new house was reduced by 482 square-feet, and the building was moved closer to the street. This has resulted in an increased setback from the downhill portion of the lot oriented towards "lower Cielito" and the building and deck areas being sited primarily on the existing pad. The deck cantilevers were minimized, and portions of the deck stepped down approximately two to four feet. The DRB is requiring a further reduction in the size of the house and a reduction in the size of the south deck to further reduce the cantilevering.
- The subterranean 3-car garage was reoriented after the first hearing so that it is parallel with the street and relocated below the house. While the proposed subterranean garage is not consistent with the predominant neighborhood pattern, the DRB did not cite any concerns aside from its location on the site at the first hearing. The current siting of the garage was based on the DRB conditions of approval and the deliberation during the first hearing.
- The width of the driveway was reduced by four feet for the majority of its length following the first hearing, though the driveway width at the driveway apron and in the street-front setback was unchanged. A condition of approval requires that the driveway in this area be reduced to minimize the amount of paving in the front setback.
- The project will maintain 9,826 square-feet (42%) of the lot as ungraded open space. The usable outdoor spaces for this project includes a new outdoor deck located at the rear of the house, and at the front there will be new drought tolerant landscaping and water features adjacent to the walkways.
- The project includes new drought tolerant landscaping throughout the site that will complement the building design. The rooftop also features landscaping, potted cactus plants.

- The project will maintain some of the existing retaining walls, primarily at the front of the new house, parallel to upper Cielito Drive. New retaining walls are also proposed along the driveway and at the outdoor deck areas at the rear.

### **Determination of Compatibility: Mass and Scale**

The proposed massing and scale are appropriate to the site and its surroundings for the following reasons:

- The immediate neighborhood surrounding the subject property (300 lineal feet of site) features one-story homes, with a few 2-story homes located at the end of the road and outside the immediate neighborhood. While the proposal to construct a new 2-story house over a subterranean 3-car garage differs from the neighborhood context, the DRB did not cite any major concerns with this at the first hearing and did not impose any conditions with the redesign requiring the subterranean garage to be omitted from the design or a reduction in the number of stories.
- Based on the conditions placed on the redesign of the project that were related to the size of the house and reductions in the overall sense of mass and scale, the livable area was reduced from 5,337 square-feet to 4,855 square-feet after the first hearing. A condition of approval for the redesigned project requires a further reduction of floor area (minimum 15% from the original proposal) to ensure compatibility with the neighborhood.
- The massing is broken up through the use of varied building volumes that articulate the facades, balconies, and changes in the façade planes. As discussed during the second hearing, the Board is requiring that the outdoor deck to be reduced in size and for the primary bedroom at the upper floor to step back from the façade below to help improve the massing as seen from below.
- The overall height of the new house with the subterranean garage remains at 32'-0" which is the maximum permitted by code. While the height remains the same, the project has been redesigned after the first hearing so that the building pad is lowered by four feet, thereby minimizing the appearance of the height from the public right-of-way. The Board has added a consideration that the overall building height be reduced by decreasing the floor-to-floor heights at the first and second floors.
- The project features a flat roof design, which is consistent with the modern design concept of the new house.

### **Determination of Compatibility: Design and Detailing**

The proposed design and detailing are appropriate to the site and its surroundings for the following reasons:

- A condition of approval for the project requires the original design concept that was presented at the May 26, 2022 hearing, especially at the front façade, to be

reinstated. As conditioned, the selected style fits within the neighborhood which features a mix of architectural styles, include modern style homes.

- The design of the entryway is similar to the original proposal, with a canopy at the first floor breaking up the 2-story volume. The entryway and entry doors have been designed to be appropriately integrated into the overall design.
- The new doors and windows will be clear anodized, black aluminum, and the windows will be an appropriate combination of fixed and casement.
- The proposed materials for the house include smooth finish plaster, natural limestone masonry veneer, and horizontal wood siding. The materials are high quality, reinforce the design concept, and the color palette is appropriate to the hillside area.
- The design of the new light fixtures is appropriate to the modern design concept, and the lights are appropriately located on the exterior building façades and outdoor areas.
- The trash storage and mechanical equipment are appropriately located along the southerly elevation and will not be visible from the street.

DRB Staff Member Vista Ezzati, Planner

Notes:

Contact the case planner for an appointment for a DRB stamp prior to submittal for plan check.

The Design Review Board approves the design of project only. Approval of a project by the Design Review Board does not constitute an approval of compliance with the Zoning Code and/or Building Code requirements.

If an appeal is not filed within the 15-day appeal period of the Design Review Board decision, plans may be approved for Building Division plan check. Prior to Building Division plan check submittal, Design Review Board approved plans must be stamped approved by the Design Review staff.

Any changes to the approved plans may constitute returning to the Design Review Board for approval. Prior to Building Division plan check submittal, all changes in substantial conformance with approved plans by the Design Review Board must be on file with the Planning Division.