

September 25, 2023

Planning Department  
City of Santa Clara  
Santa Clara, CA

Variance request for: 1. Garage building height.  
2. Garage floor area.

Project Location: 324 Madison Street  
Santa Clara, CA 95050  
APN: 269-41-030

Dear Planning Staff & Commissioners:

This application includes plans to demolish an existing detached 364 square foot one-car garage with 256 square foot side porch with a 671 square foot 2-car garage with toilet room.

We understand that the Planning Commission must make the following four findings in order to grant the variances (Sec 18.108.040). Our justification for the variance is as follows:

***(A) That there are unusual conditions applying to the land or building which do not apply generally in the same district:***

*(1) Unusual property due to its location in the historic Old Quad.*

This R1-6L zoned property is unusual in that it resides in the Old Quad where many detached accessory structures (garages, carriage houses, barns) built prior to the 1969 Zoning Ordinance exceed the 12 foot height limit and 480 square foot floor area limit set by the Ordinance. Though other detached garages in the R1-6 zoning district exist that comply with the current Ordinance, most are associated with the newer ranch-style tract developments built after the 1969 Zoning Ordinance was approved and have lower pitched ranch-style roofs that are discouraged in the Old Quad. It is no surprise that the long overdue Zoning Ordinance update currently in draft form proposes to increase the allowable building height for a garage (accessory structure) to 16 feet and increase the allowable floor area of a detached garage to 600 square feet with the ability to increase both metrics by up to 25% more with a Zoning Administrator Modification. The proposed project meets the criteria of the Draft Zoning Ordinance.

We are proposing a 17 foot building height to provide a building form that is more in keeping with the design aesthetic of the older "carriage-style" accessory structures built throughout the Old Quad and to provide a minimum ceiling height required for the homeowner to work on his many historic truck restoration projects. Additionally, the steeper 6/12 roof pitch proposed is more in keeping with many historic outbuildings in the Old Quad versus those associated with

ranch-style homes throughout the R1-6L zoning district that have lower pitched roofs that are discouraged in the Old Quad. .

At 8,950 square feet in area, the subject property is unusual for the R1-6L zoning district in that it is nearly 50% larger than the 6,000 square foot standard lot size for the district. The proposed 671 square foot garage is 40% larger than the 480 square foot allowed under the current zoning ordinance and so the proposed increase is proportional to the unusually large property.

The existing zoning ordinance is outdated in only permitting a 480 square foot detached garage. Garages of this size are barely large enough to fit modern cars (think large SUV's and trucks) with little room for much needed storage or workbench space. Many garages of this size that do have storage lining the sides and rear walls require you to be houdini to get in and out of your car and shimmy between the car and storage. This is supported by the fact that the Draft Zoning Ordinance update proposes to allow a 600 square foot garage with the ability to increase up to and additional 25% with a Zoning Administrator Modification. The proposed project meets the criteria of the Draft Zoning Ordinance and would not require a Variance.

***(B) That the granting of the variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of substantial property rights of the petitioner:***

The homeowner restores vintage trucks and would like to build a garage that is of sufficient height and floor area to allow to use the garage for this purpose and therefore is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of their property.

***(C) That the granting of such variance shall not, under the circumstances for the particular case, materially affect adversely the health, safety, peace, morals, comfort or general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the applicant's property, and will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in said neighborhood:***

*(1) Designed Sensitively to Neighbors*

The proposed garage will not materially affect adversely the health, safety, peace, morals, comfort, or general welfare of the neighborhood. The proposed garage is located at the rear of the property similar to other accessory buildings on neighboring properties and preserves all of the adjacent neighbors' privacy and sunlight. The garage proposed will back up to the existing garage of the neighbor to the rear and it is located to the North of the neighbor to the South where the additional height will not shade their pool.

***(D) That the granting of the variance is in keeping with the purpose and intent of this title:***

Granting this variance does not allow the property owner to by-pass the developmental requirements for all future buildings proposed. We are proposing 5-foot side yard (3-foot is allowed by the current zoning ordinance) and rear yard building setback which meets the requirements for accessory structures.

We appreciate you taking the time to consider our project and hope that you agree that it is a good project worth supporting.

Regards,

Tommy and Stephanie Tran