

CITY OF LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

April 14, 2015 Meeting

Applicant/Property Owner:
Steve Applebaum and Chien Fang
4427 Commonwealth Avenue
La Canada Flintridge, CA 91011

Case Type / Number: Floor Area Review 15-01

Architect:
Craig Stoddard
4452 Ocean View Blvd
Montrose, CA 91020

Site Address:
4427 Commonwealth Avenue

Case Planner:
Jo-Anne Parinas

1. Request:

The request is for a Floor Area Review to construct a 760-square foot accessory structure (workshop) on a lot with an average lot width less than 80 feet.

2. Location:

The site is located on the west side of Commonwealth Avenue, north of its intersection with Georgian Road, in the R-1-, 20,000 zone.

3. Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the request **BE APPROVED**, subject to the conditions listed in Exhibit "A", attached to the draft resolution.

4. Project Size:

Lot area:	30,560 sq. ft.
Existing house:	4,276 sq. ft.
Existing Garage:	793 sq. ft.
Existing Patio:	617 sq. ft.
Existing Balcony:	230 sq. ft.
Existing Cabana:	195 sq. ft.

Proposed Workshop:	760 sq. ft.
Proposed Trellis Patio:	238 sq. ft. (does not count towards floor area)
Total:	6,841 sq. ft.
FAR	0.27

5. General Plan / Zoning / Existing Land Use:

The Land Use Map identifies the site as Low Density Residential – up to 2 Dwelling Units per Acre. The property is designated R-1-20,000 (Single Family Residential – 20,000 Square Foot Minimum Lot Size). The site is developed with a two-story residence.

6. Environmental Impact Review:

Staff has determined that the proposed Floor Area Review is Categorically Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act, under Section 2.5(c)(5)(accessory structures) of the City of La Cañada Flintridge Guidelines for the Implementation of CEQA.

7. Previous Action:

None.

8. Pending and Potential Actions:

Plan check and issuance of building permit.

9. Staff Analysis:

A. Context:

The subject property is on the west side of Commonwealth Avenue, north of its intersection with Georgian Road. The property is 75’ feet wide and has a depth of approximately 405 feet. The neighborhood is composed of one and two-story residences on narrow lots. The majority of neighboring lots on Commonwealth Avenue, between Foothill Boulevard and Berkshire Avenue are less than 80’ in width.



B. Project Description:

The proposal is for a 760-square foot workshop/storage accessory structure and a 238-square foot trellis patio. The trellis patio is greater than 50% open and does not have a roof, therefore, does not count towards the total floor area on the lot. Since the project would result in total floor area over the 4,500-sq.

ft. review threshold for parcels with an average width less than 80 feet, Floor Area Review is required. The project is compliant with respect to setbacks and height. The overall height of the proposed workshop/storage structure would be 15'-0". The project plans indicate an 8'-0" north side setback. Based on the lot width, the required side setback would be 7'-6", however, since the project involves a Floor Area Review, the required side setback for the project is 8'-0", which the project complies with.

The project compares with code standards as follows:

	<u>Standard:</u>	<u>Existing:</u>	<u>Project:</u>
Floor Area:	4,500 S.F.	6,111 S.F.	6,841 S.F.
FA allowed based on lot size	7,862 S.F.		
Front SB:	73'-6"	76'	N/A
South Side SB:	8'-0"	0'	40'-0"
North Side SB:	8'-0"	5'-0"	8'-0"
Rear SB:	15'-0"	201'	60'-0"
Height (workshop/storage only):	15'-0"	N/A	15'-0"

C. Floor Area Review:

Issues / Discussion

Floor area review is required because the project exhibits floor area over the 4,500-square foot review threshold for parcels with an average width less than 80 feet. One of the intentions of establishing the Floor Area Review application is to allow the City to review projects on narrow lots that may have the potential to be too deep and out of scale with the neighborhood. Rather than expanding the depth of the existing house the proposed workshop/storage would be detached and would be located approximately 124' away from the existing residence. In staff's opinion, the proposed workshop/storage would not negatively impact neighboring properties given that the primary structure on the north side neighbor is distant and is adjacent to an unimproved area of the north side neighbor's backyard. In addition the proposed workshop is distant and screened from the south and west side neighbors.

The project would not be out of scale with the neighborhood in terms of building depth given that the depth of the existing residence will not change. Based on its lot size, the site could accommodate 7,862 square feet of floor area. The existing residence with the project would yield a total floor area of 6,841 square feet. The proposed floor area is consistent with other lots in the neighborhood.

Finding

1. Through its siting, screening, and/or massing effects, the project is compatible with its neighborhood setting.

The proposed workshop/storage would not negatively impact neighboring properties given that the primary structure on the north side neighbor is distant and is adjacent to an unimproved area of the north side neighbor's backyard. In addition the proposed workshop is distant and screened from the south and west side neighbors. The project would not be out of scale with the neighborhood in terms of the

building depth given that the depth of the existing residence will not change. The proposed floor area is consistent with other lots in the neighborhood. Staff supports the finding.

D. Recommendation:

Based on the above discussion, staff recommends that the request **BE APPROVED**, subject to conditions listed in Exhibit "A", attached to the resolution.

RESOLUTION NO. 15

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE APPROVING FLOOR AREA REVIEW 15-01 AT 4427 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE FOR STEVE APPLEBAUM AND CHIEN FANG

WHEREAS, a request by Steve Applebaum and Chien Fang has been received for Floor Area Review to allow the construction of a 760-square foot workshop/storage structure exceeding the total floor area limits for lots less than 80 feet of average lot width on a 30,560-square foot lot, said request attached hereto and incorporated by reference; and

WHEREAS, after publication and posting of the request in the prescribed manner, the Planning Commission, on April 14, 2015, held a public hearing on the project; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission determined that no significant environmental impacts would result from the project, which is Categorically Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under 2.5(c)(5)(accessory structures) of the City of La Cañada Flintridge Guidelines for the implementation of CEQA; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has reviewed the facts contained in the staff report dated April 14, 2015 regarding the application for a Floor Area Review, and heard and considered the testimony of the applicant and the public; and

Section 1.

Floor Area Review:

1. The proposed workshop/storage would not negatively impact neighboring properties given that the primary structure on the north side neighbor is distant and is adjacent to an unimproved area of the north side neighbor's backyard. In addition the proposed workshop is distant and screened from the south and west side neighbors. The project would not be out of scale with the neighborhood in terms of the building depth given that the depth of the existing residence will not change. The proposed floor area is consistent with other lots in the neighborhood.

Section 2.

Based on the above findings, the Planning Commission of the City of La Cañada Flintridge hereby approve the Floor Area Review for a workshop/storage structure and related site work at 4427 Commonwealth Avenue, subject to the conditions listed in Exhibit "A", attached to this resolution.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 14th day of April 2015.

Chair of the Planning Commission

ATTEST:

Secretary to the Planning Commission

EXHIBIT “A”
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL
FLOOR AREA REVIEW 15-01
4427 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE

1. Compliance with and execution of all conditions listed herein shall be necessary prior to obtaining final building inspection clearance and/or prior to obtaining any occupancy clearance. Deviation from this requirement shall be only by written consent of the Director of Community Development.
2. This approval is granted for the land or land use as described in the application and any attachments thereto, and as shown on the site plan submitted, labeled Floor Area Review 15-01.
3. Prior to obtaining a building permit or when applicable initiation of use, the applicant and property owner shall file with the Secretary of the Planning Commission written acknowledgment of the conditions stated herein on forms provided by the Planning Department.
4. All structures, site work and other features including but not limited to, buildings, roadways, parking areas, landscaping and other facilities shall be located and maintained as shown on the plans labeled Floor Area Review 15-01, except as otherwise stated in these conditions.
5. This approval will expire unless “start of construction” is commenced within 12 months after approval is granted and diligently pursued thereafter. The Director of Community Development may extend the original expiration date by as much as 12 months upon receipt of a written request from the applicant prior to expiration of the original approval if the approved project and applicable zoning standards are unchanged. Start of construction is defined as:
 - a. All zoning and related approvals are effective; and
 - b. All required building and grading permits for the project have been issued; and
 - c. The "foundation inspection" and "concrete slab or underfloor inspection" have been made and received approval from the Department of Building and Safety; i.e., all trenches must be excavated, forms erected, and all materials for the foundation delivered on the job and all in-slab or underfloor building service equipment, conduit, piping accessories and other ancillary equipment items must be in place. Nothing in this definition shall be construed to alter the applicable legal standards for determining when vested property rights to complete the project have arisen.
6. All applicable requirements of any law, ordinance, or regulation of the City of La Cañada Flintridge shall be complied with.
7. This approval is subject to the applicant paying all fees and assessments to the City of La Cañada Flintridge, as established by Resolution of the City Council.
8. In the event the City determines that it is necessary to take legal action to enforce any of the provisions of these conditions, and such legal action is taken, the

applicant agrees to pay any and all costs of such legal action, including reasonable attorney's fees, incurred by the City, even if the matter is not prosecuted to a final judgment or is amicably resolved, unless the City should otherwise agree with the applicant to waive said fees or any part thereof. The foregoing shall not apply if the permittee prevails in the enforcement proceeding.

9. The applicant shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City and its officers, agents, and employees from any claim, action or proceeding against the City or its officers, agents, or employees to attack, set aside, void, or annul approval of this Floor Area Review. The City shall promptly notify the applicant of any such claim, action, or proceeding and shall cooperate fully in the defense.
10. An approval granted by the Planning Commission does not constitute a building permit or authorization to begin any construction. An appropriate permit issued by the Department of Building and Safety must be obtained prior to construction, enlargement, relocation, conversion, or demolition of any building or structure within the City.
11. All construction/contractor parking shall be on-site only. At the time of approval, if it is deemed by the Planning Commission that sufficient on-site parking may not be available, then on-street parking in front of the site will be permitted if it can be demonstrated that such parking will not interfere with the immediate neighbors, and will not interfere with the public's use of the surrounding streets. If this cannot be found, then any additional construction vehicle or equipment parking must occur off-site at a location approved by the Director of Community Development. Approval of the off-site location shall be based on the submittal of a Parking Management Plan by the applicant that demonstrates that the site shall not interfere with the neighbors in the area or hinder the public's use of the surrounding streets. Contractors and construction workers will be required to carpool to the construction site. No construction, no deliveries and no movement of construction materials shall occur on Sundays or City recognized holidays.
12. Any work in the public right-of-way shall require review and approval by the Public Works Department prior to construction. Any removal and/or replacement of curb and gutter, and driveway apron shall be reviewed and approved by the Public Works Department.
13. A survey prepared and stamped by a licensed surveyor shall be submitted to the Planning Department prior to building permit issuance.

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