

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE  
HELD ON JULY 11, 2017**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Gunter called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

**II. ROLL**

Also present were Vice Chairman Hazen and Commissioners McConnell, Jain, and Oh.

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Flag Salute was recited.

**IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

There were none.

**V. REORDERING OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was not reordered.

**VI. CONSENT CALENDAR**

There were none.

**VII. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

**VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

A. Hillside Development Permit 17-19; PDS Studio Inc./Monte Valido LLC; 4621 Indiana Avenue:

Commissioner McConnell recused himself and left the meeting.

Planner Gjolme gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report.

Commissioner Oh asked if a Palmer Oak tree qualifies as a protected tree. He asked if tree removal permit applications go to the Director.

Planner Gjolme said that the tree is a protected tree. He confirmed that tree removal permit applications go before the Director for review. He

explained that in this particular case that he did not believe that the existing trees on the site were ones that needed to be retained.

Chairman Gunter asked staff for further justification for removal of the trees.

Mr. Gjolme said that staff can allow for the trees to be removed if they find they pose a hardship.

Chairman Gunter asked about the floor plan shown on Sheet A2 of the plans and the truss ceiling and whether the height of that space could be counted as a second floor. He asked how the space would be measured and whether it would require a condition of approval.

Mr. Gjolme said it is exempt volume space. He said that the absolute height measure would be used along the exterior of the building.

Chairman Gunter asked if a survey was given to the Commission.

Mr. Gjolme said he believed a survey was part of the plan set he reviewed.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Speaker, architect, Philip Chan explained that the natural slope could be challenging and that the lot is unique. He said that a one-story home would fit in better with surrounding properties. He explained that he pushed the building back to provide articulation. He also paid attention to drainage. Mr. Chan said that he believed that the pitch that is proposed is the best for the architectural style. He said he could reduce the pitch a little bit, but then the architectural style would be impaired somewhat.

Mr. Chan also spoke of the retaining wall and the fact that the proposed building would work well with the existing trees. He said that an arborist has ensured that the building would work with the existing trees.

Vice Chairman Hazen asked if the fill area would be raised as well.

Mr. Chan said that the retaining walls are existing so the back portion will not be impacted as much. He believed the swimming pool area will be increased.

Mr. Gjolme expressed a concern with the berm being too close to adjacent Sycamore trees. He believed the berm level should be adjusted. He said that the project arborist will provide the applicant feedback about grading near the trees.

The applicant said he would be amendable to changing the height and the grade to meet code. He said to further mitigate, he could make some interior changes to the floor plan and add more articulation.

Mr. Gjolme recommended modulation every 40 feet.

The applicant clarified that he would provide more articulation on the West elevation.

Speaker, Shawn Yu, Project Civil Engineer explained that the proposed roof pitch would still provide adequate drainage. He indicated that if there was still an issue, that a sump pump could be considered. He also explained that the pad could be raised by 3 – 3 ½ feet at the very most. Mr. Yu said that if the pad were lowered, it could present drainage problems.

Speaker, Jeffrey McConnell, 4620 Alta Canyon Road, explained that he lives in the house that is due west of the project. He explained that the adjacent properties are at a raised height which creates a different perspective of the project's roof. The roof could be mitigated by vegetation. He said that he believed that since no survey was provided that the grade could not be reviewed properly.

Mr. McConnell recommended a condition that the overall height of the project does not exceed 1538.5.

Mr. McConnell expressed concerns about grade and drainage. He also explained that no tree removal permit has been submitted and no survey as well which could change the environmental process. He also believes that the project exceeds Floor Area Ratio (FAR) requirements. He believes that the open truss ceiling would represent 16% of the overall project square footage. He stated that the existing truss structure would result in the area being counted as volume space. He said that possibly the existing chain link fence could be his fence and he has not viewed a survey to determine whether it is or not. What is unclear is how close the retaining walls would be to the Deodar tree. The tree line extends into the Palmer Oak dripline.

Mr. McConnell recommended that the length of the proposal be 120 feet in length as opposed to 134 feet. He thought that perhaps the height of the house could be in compliance if the ridge was lowered.

The applicant was invited back up. He explained that the floor plan and height and massing on the west portion of the building could possibly be adjusted.

Commissioner Oh asked the applicant if the retaining wall and existing landscaping was being removed.

The applicant said that he would be planting landscaping for privacy which a Carolina Cherry tree could provide.

Commissioner Oh asked if the design of the home was lowered, where the current drainage would go.

The applicant indicated that he found that during recent heavy rains, the water permeated through the ground and no flooding resulted.

Commissioner Jain asked if the Fire Department had been consulted about the project and Chairman Gunter asked if the Fire Department would review the landscaping around the house.

Director Stanley indicated, "yes."

Chairman Gunter indicated that the trees should be of varying heights in order to provide an interesting view rather than landscaping that is all the same height.

Mr. Gjolme said that there is a condition of approval that requires that the landscaping plan be altered to provide more natural and varied landscaping.

Vice Chairman Hazen said that a 100-foot tall Deodar tree would require a large dripline.

Director Stanley explained that a Deodar tree is located off the project site and the chain link fence is on another property and he was not sure where a tree could be placed.

Chairman Gunter said that he is used to seeing a survey that shows the existing conditions. He said that the Commission likes to have the surveys

to review because sometimes items such as an easement might be shown on the survey, which is helpful for the Commissioners.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Commissioner Oh visited the site. He said he understands the need to build up the building pad. The applicant indicated that currently runoff would percolate. He also believed that a sump pump would not be reasonable. He said that if the north-south wing were decreased and reworked, then some of the massing and the Palmer Oak tree could possibly be saved. He said he would like to see more articulation proposed.

Vice Chairman Hazen believed the project will be good when completed and he appreciates the applicant's willingness to accept the recommendation to break up the roof in order to provide more articulation. He said he would like to ensure that the Deodar tree would not be impacted.

Commissioner Jain recommended that the dormers be placed to the west so they can break up the monotony of the roof. He believed that if the length was reduced, then there could be a chance to save the tree. He said that redesigning could result in lowering the height of the roof. He said he would like to see the roof line broken up.

Chairman Gunter said that he visited the site. He believed the design is good and careful attention was made to designing the project. He said that a minor reduction in the pad and in the slope of the roof would aid in compliance with codes. He agreed with Mr. Hazen and Jain that the roof length is a problem. He suggested that a survey be submitted and he asked for a continuance. He said he would not need a full staff report next time.

Mr. Gjolme asked the Commission for clarification regarding reworking of the story poles.

Chairman Gunter said he did not believe the story poles being revised was necessary.

The Public Hearing was reopened.

The applicant said that 2 weeks would be sufficient.

Mr. Gjolme recommended in light of all of this, that it would be good to continue the item to July 25, 2017.

He explained that he would work with the applicant regarding the home's articulation and grading around the trees.

The Public Hearing was closed.

M/S/C – Gunter/Jain to continue the item to a date certain of July 25<sup>th</sup>  
Approved 4-0.

Commissioner McConnell rejoined the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

## **IX. REPORT OF DIRECTOR'S REVIEWS**

Were reviewed.

**A. Hillside Development Permit 17-20 (Dir.); Luk; 5245 Bubbling Well Lane:** allowed a 448 sq. ft. 1<sup>st</sup>-floor addition to an existing residence on a hillside lot.

**B. Director's Misc. Review 17-18 (Setback); Palladino; 2119 Lyans Drive:** allowed a 1,084 sq. ft. addition to an existing single-story residence with encroachments into the required front and west side yard setbacks. The additions will maintain the home's building line and will not encroach beyond the existing structure.

**C. Director's Misc. Review 16-16 (pool & spa equipment); Matarese; 4234 Chevy Chase Drive:** allowed pool/spa equipment to be located within the required north side setback.

## **X. OTHER BUSINESS**

**A. Substantial Conformance Determination:** Second-floor Review 15-14/Director's Misc. Review 17-02 (roof equipment); Liao; 5465 La Forest Drive.

The Commission did not require a full report.

Assistant Planner Harris explained that the cantilevered area and floor plans were reviewed. The terrace behind bedroom 2 was not originally cantilevered. The neighbors located to the north are at a much higher level.

She said that the proposed colors should be reviewed. She explained that under a Director's Review, the boxed parapet roof at the entry was approved. The applicant would like to change the shed roof and propose the roof to still be a flat portion Ms. Harris showed the Commission a photo. She presented a color and material board to the Commission which identified the proposed colors. She explained that the colors that were originally submitted were more of a "sand" color. The new color that was submitted would be darker. Ms. Harris indicated that she believed the new darker color submittal would provide interest and would be more of a modern finish as opposed to traditional. She explained that many revisions have been made by the applicant and that is why it is before the Commission.

M/S/C – Gunter/Hazen finding that the redesign substantially Approved 5-0.

**XI. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS**

There were none.

**XII. COMMENTS FROM THE DIRECTOR**

There were none.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

M/S/C - Gunter/Jain to adjourn the meeting at 7:44 p.m. Approved 5-0.

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Secretary to the Planning Commission