

# CITY OF LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE

## PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

January 10, 2017 Meeting

**Applicant/Property Owner:**

Vahik and Eileen Krikorian  
5708 Alder Ridge Drive  
La Cañada Flintridge, CA 91011

**Case Type / Number:**

Second-Floor Review 15-02 (Amend)

**Site Address:** 5708 Alder Ridge Drive

**Case Planner:**

Harriet Harris ~ Assistant Planner

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### 1. Request:

*A. Background:*

The applicant is proposing to amend a project that was previously approved at the October 25, 2016 Planning Commission meeting. The original proposal allowed the construction of a new two-story house with a front-yard setback encroachment that exceeded the allowable floor area for the area-reduced flag lot.



*B. Proposed Amendment:*

The applicant is proposing to modify Condition No. 11 of the approved project. Which states (emphasis added):

11. Additional trees or screening shrubbery shall be provided along the rear property line to screen the new second floor from the neighbors. The species, number, plant size and spacing of said trees and shrubs shall be indicated on a landscape plan subject to the review and approval by the Director of Community Development prior to issuance of any permits. The trees and/or shrubs shall be sufficient in height to screen the structures from offsite views and at a minimum shall be **no lower than 10' in height**. No final clearance/occupancy shall be granted until the Director of Community Development or his designee confirms that the landscaping installation is complete and consistent with the approved plan.

Originally, the applicants had proposed a 6' high hedge and there was some discussion at the Planning Commission meeting about the hedge height. Staff and some of the Planning Commissioners felt that a 10' hedge would be adequate to protect the privacy of the downslope neighbors from the new second floor. Subsequently, the applicants have requested to lower the required landscape screening to 8' high. The attached diagram shows a 7' high hedge for the rear property line on the southwest side but staff is recommending 8' for both hedges.

## 2. Staff Analysis:

The applicant has indicated that they would like to reduce the height of the required landscaping to 7' and 8' high instead of the conditioned 10' high landscape screening. They felt that a 10' high hedge created a walled effect for the back yard and eliminated views of the mountains. Staff revisited the site and the Director of Community Development viewed the downslope properties from the roof of the subject property at similar points shown on the line-of-sight exhibit. It was observed that an 8' hedge would be sufficient to protect the privacy in the rear yards of the downslope neighbors and still preserve the mountain views of the subject property. At the invitation of the downslope neighbor staff also visited the



neighbor at 5687 Bramblewood Road. As viewed from various locations in their backyard an 8' high hedge would significantly screen the story poles. The neighbor concurred that an 8' high hedge should be sufficient to alleviate any privacy concerns. Based on the line-of-sight exhibit and the site observations from both the subject property and the downslope neighbor at 5687 Bramblewood Road staff can recommend the amendment to Condition No. 11 to reduce the hedge height to 8'

## 3. Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the revised request **BE APPROVED** subject to the original conditions of approval with revised Condition No. 11 and the attached resolution.

## A. Second Floor Review:

### *Issues*

Second-floor windows were proposed along the northwest, southeast and rear façades. At the meeting, there was some discussion that enhanced landscaping could alleviate any privacy concerns. The applicant had initially proposed to install 6' high landscape screening along the rear property line but the project was ultimately approved with a condition of approval that required 10' high landscape screening along the rear property line. The applicant has provided sight-line analysis that indicates that the 8' high landscape screening would be adequate to provide privacy to the downslope neighbors, as well as, on site observations by staff from the subject property and the neighbor below.

### *Findings*

#### **1. The two-story design includes adequate setbacks, screening and modulation.**

The new second floor exceeds the all the required setbacks. With the addition of the trellis and window boxes, adequate articulation is provided along all façades and the design of the new second-floor integrates well with the existing first floor. As amended, the conditioned screening along the rear property line would minimize the impacts of the project. Upslope views of the new second-floor would be profiled against the slope and existing trees across the shared driveway. Staff supports the finding.

#### **2. The two-story design preserves the existing scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood.**

Many of the homes in the immediate neighborhood are two-story homes. While the new second floor would alter the appearance of the structure, it would blend in with the neighborhood. The amended project would still preserve the existing scale and character of the eclectic neighborhood. Staff supports the finding.

#### **3. The two-story design protects public views, aesthetics, privacy, and property values of the neighbors.**

As conditioned for additional screening at the rear property line, the amended project would not adversely impact adjacent houses. As amended, the 8' high proposed screening would adequately protect the downslope neighbors' privacy. Staff supports the finding.

#### **4. The two-story design is consistent with the Residential Design Guidelines as adopted by resolution of the City Council.**

The new second-floor addition would still integrate well with the existing structure and would utilize compatible materials to blend in with the existing structure. The street setting would be minimally impacted by the new second floor. Primary views of the new

second floor would be from three of the five homes along the shared drive. Upslope views from the rear neighbor would still be mitigated by the additional amended-height landscape screening. The materials utilized by the project would be consistent with the primary directives of the City's Residential Design Guidelines. Staff supports the finding.

B. Recommendation:

Based on the above discussion, staff believes that the amendment request is appropriate based on the analysis provided by the applicant and would recommend that the amended Second-Floor Review request **BE APPROVED**, subject to conditions listed in Exhibit "A", attached to the draft resolution.

*Attachments:*

*Draft Resolution*

*Approval Resolution 16-53 dated October 25, 2016*

*Planning Commission Minutes dated July 26, 2016, September 27, 2016*

*Draft Minutes dated October 25, 2016*

cc: Vahik and Eileen Krikorian / 5708 Alder Ridge Drive / La Cañada Flintridge, CA 91011

# CITY OF LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE

## RESOLUTION NO. 17-xx

### A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE APPROVING SECOND-FLOOR REVIEW 15-02 (AMENDMENT) TO AMEND CONDITION NO. 11 PERTAINING TO THE LANDSCAPE HEDGE HEIGHT IN THE REAR YARD. AT 5708 ALDER RIDGE DRIVE AS REQUESTED BY VAHIK AND EILEEN KRIKORIAN

**WHEREAS**, a request by Vahik and Eileen Krikorian has been received to amend a condition of approval for a previously approved Second Floor Review. The applicant is requesting to revise Condition No. 11 pertaining to the landscape hedge height in the rear yard, said request attached hereto and incorporated by reference; and

**WHEREAS**, after publication and posting of the amendment request in the prescribed manner, the Planning Commission, on January 10, 2017 held a public hearing on the amended project, conducted a review of the request; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission reviewed the project and determined that no significant environmental impacts would result from the amended project, which is Categorically Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act, under Class 2.5(e)(1)(minor variances) and 2.5(a)(4)(ii)(additions) 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 January 10, 2017 regarding the request to amend a Condition of approval for a previously approved Second-Floor Review, and heard and considered the testimony of the applicant and the public; and hereby determines the following:

#### Section 1.

##### *Second Floor Review:*

1. The two-story design includes adequate setbacks, screening and modulation since the new second floor exceeds the all the required setbacks. With the addition of the trellis and window boxes, adequate articulation is provided along all façades and the design of the new second-floor integrates well with the existing first floor. As amended, the conditioned screening along the rear property line would minimize the impacts of the project. Upslope views of the new second-floor would be profiled against the slope and existing trees across the shared driveway.

2. The two-story design preserves the existing scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood because many of the homes in the immediate neighborhood are two-story homes. While the new second floor would alter the appearance of the structure, it would blend in with the neighborhood. The amended project would still preserve the existing scale and character of the eclectic neighborhood.
3. The two-story design protects public views, aesthetics, privacy, and property values of the neighbors because, as conditioned for additional screening at the rear property line, the amended project would not adversely impact adjacent houses. As amended, the 8' high proposed screening would adequately protect the downslope neighbors' privacy.
4. The two-story design is consistent with the Residential Design Guidelines as adopted by resolution of the City Council because the new second-floor addition would still integrate well with the existing structure and would utilize compatible materials to blend in with the existing structure. The street setting would be minimally impacted by the new second floor. Primary views of the new second floor would be from three of the five homes along the shared drive. Upslope views from the rear neighbor would still be mitigated by the additional amended-height landscape screening. The materials utilized by the project would be consistent with the primary directives of the City's Residential Design Guidelines.

Section 2.

Based on the above findings, the Planning Commission of the City of La Cañada Flintridge hereby approves the amended Second-Floor Review to amend Condition No. 11 pertaining to the required landscape screening at 5708 Alder Ridge Drive, subject to the conditions listed in Exhibit "A", attached to this resolution.

**PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED** this 10<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2017.

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Chair of the Planning Commission

ATTEST:

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Secretary to the Planning Commission

**EXHIBIT "A"**  
**CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**  
**SECOND-FLOOR REVIEW 15-02 (Amend)**  
**5708 Alder Ridge Drive**

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 Second-Floor Review 15-02 (Amendment).
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 Second-Floor Review 15-02 (Amendment), except as otherwise stated in these conditions.
5. This approval will expire unless "start of construction" is commenced within 24 months after approval is granted and diligently pursued thereafter. The Director of Community Development may extend the original expiration date by as much as 24 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, deposits and assessments to the City of La Cañada Flintridge, as established by policy, ordinance or resolution of the City Council prior to occupancy or initiation of use. This includes payment for contracted staff services as invoiced to the city.
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 project. 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. (Amended) Additional trees or screening shrubbery shall be provided along the rear property line to screen the new second floor from the neighbors. The species, number, plant size and spacing of said trees and shrubs shall be indicated on a landscape plan subject to the review and approval by the Director of Community Development prior to issuance of any permits. The trees and/or shrubs shall be sufficient in height to screen the structures from offsite views and at a minimum shall be no lower than 8' in height. No final clearance/occupancy shall be granted until the Director of Community Development or his designee confirms that the landscaping installation is complete and consistent with the approved plan.
12. All construction/contractor parking shall be on-site only. If it is deemed by the Director of Community Development that sufficient on-site parking may not be available, a Parking Management Plan shall be prepared by the applicant indicated where additional construction vehicles will be parked. Any additional construction vehicle or equipment parking may be required to occur off-site at a location approved by the Director of Community Development. The Parking Management Plan prepared by the applicant shall demonstrate that the alternate

location 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.

Public Works Conditions:

13. Prior to plan check submittal, the site plan should be revised to indicate the existing/proposed sewer mainline on Alder Ridge Drive and existing/proposed point of connection (lateral) serving the project.
14. Prior to building occupancy, applicant shall demolish existing damaged driveway approach and install a new concrete driveway approach that conforms to the provisions of Chapter 8.01 of the Municipal Code and the Standard Plans for Public Works Construction (SPPWC) 110-2. New approach width and type shall be indicated on the site plan.
15. A Public Works encroachment and or/ excavation permit is required prior to any work within the public right-of-way.
16. Any proposed mailbox structure shall be approved and permitted by Public Works

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