

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON MARCH 4, 2010**

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Vavoulis called the meeting to order at 7:31 a.m.
- II. ROLL:** Present were Commissioners Friedmann, Hoopes, Roberts, Tobias, Director of Community Development Stanley, Planners Gjolme and Clarke, and Consulting Architect Cantrell.
- III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Flag Salute was recited.
- IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** There were no comments.
- V. CONSENT CALENDAR:**
- A.** Minutes – February 10, 2010 DC Meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously.

B. Design Review 07-10 (Amendment); Vons; 631-663 Foothill Blvd.; façade improvements, parking lot reconfiguration and new landscaping and hardscape improvements. Approval of final items per Resolution 10-03.

M/S/C Tobias /Friedmann to pull the item and discuss it further. Unanimous.

The Commission reviewed stone samples and approved the Coronado Aspen ledge stone sample that was preferred by staff.

Consultant Cantrell and the Commission noted that the bike racks were shown on the site plan in the correct locations.

Commissioner Roberts commented on the choice of African daisies as an alternate ground cover. His concern had to do with where it meets with other species and the distinct delineation that occurs.

Robert Curley – landscape architect - responded that the integration of varying shrubs and groundcover would be subtle and pleasing.

Consultant Cantrell referred to the outdoor furniture sample sheet and noted that the proposed color would be black, not green as shown on the sample sheet.

Commissioner Roberts cautioned that if the umbrellas are to have an appropriate color relationship with the various tenants, awning colors should be known at this time as well.

Michael Tseng - Perkowitz & Ruth - was not aware of any future awning installation.

Consultant Cantrell clarified that future awnings would require approval from the Commission in any event, so this was not a major concern.

Mr. Curley stated that different vendors invariably use different colors. There are no coordination issues by choosing black for the outdoor furniture.

Commissioner Tobias inquired if the wall sconces were available in an oiled bronze color.

Mr. Tseng was not sure but confirmed the sconces will be black.

Commissioner Roberts noted that maintenance is better with black, and agreed with the color choice.

Chairman Vavoulis questioned the accuracy of the color shown for the terra cotta planter pots.

Mr. Curley confirmed use of a darker oiled color. A material sample was provided as part of the color and material board, which the Commission highly regarded and endorsed.

Commissioner Roberts noted that the sconces seem very Victorian, somewhat in contrast with the Spanish influences of project.

Mr. Tseng responded that similar fixtures are used in Santa Barbara.

Commissioner Hoopes stated that he was concerned with the size of the sconces; they seemed too small given the size of the building.

Commissioner Roberts agreed that the sconces needed to be larger.

Mr. Tseng stated he would investigate the issue and provide larger samples for Commissioner Roberts' review.

Commissioner Friedmann noted that the parking lot lights should also use a black finish.

Commissioner Roberts agreed and referenced his dislike of the white fixtures used with the Panda Panda project.

Commissioner Hoopes noted that the driveway entering near TJ Maxx doesn't show splayed ends in accord with City standards.

Mr. Tseng confirmed that the driveway will incorporate splayed ends and will meet City standards.

Commissioner Hoopes remarked that the monument sign base isn't fully integrated with the street wall as was previously discussed.

Commissioner Roberts wanted assurance that the street wall and monument sign be verified and approved at the same time to ensure proper design coordination between the two structures.

Chairman Vavoulis confirmed with staff and the applicant that this would not be a problem to coordinate.

Commissioner Hoopes noted that the handicapped handrails and curb had yet to be revised in accord with previous discussion.

Mr. Tseng confirmed that the curb and handrails will be corrected on the civil plan after final consultation with Public Works.

Commissioner Friedmann addressed the look/color of the rubberized traffic triangle to be installed.

Chairman Vavoulis confirmed that the traffic triangle would not be bright orange or yellow.

Commissioner Friedmann noted the triangle could still use an appropriately contrasting color.

Director Stanley stated he would voice the Commission's concern and verify the color with the City Traffic Engineer.

M/S/C Hoopes/Friedmann to approve the project with final revisions as noted; curb at TJ Maxx to be revised in accord with City requirements; rain diverter to be placed above Vons entrance pop outs; plans to incorporate minor revisions per Commissioner Hoopes notes (planters, handicapped curb and rails); Aspen ledger stone to be used per sample submitted; parking lot lights to use a flat black finish; sconces at Vons entrance pop outs to be made larger and verified by staff and Commissioner Roberts. Approved 5-0.

VI. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. Design Review 08-24; 2197 Rockridge Terrace; new 3-unit condominium building. Final review and approval. Planner Clarke explained that revised materials were not received in time to complete a review of the project, and recommended a continuance. M/S/C Roberts/Friedmann to continue the item to the March 18, 2010 meeting. Unanimous 5-0.

VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. Design Review 10-04; 1434 Foothill Blvd.; Zentmyer Properties; preliminary review of new 4,300 sq. ft. office/retail building.

Consulting Architect Cantrell gave a project overview in accord with the staff memo. He noted that the project had been reviewed by the Planning Commission, but that input from the Design Commission was desired prior to rendering a decision.

Commissioner Hoopes stated that the end pylons appear a bit small and out of scale with the building.

Consultant Cantrell agreed and noted the importance of how they are viewed obliquely along the Foothill Blvd. He felt the lintels also needed increased scale.

Commissioner Hoopes noted the need for stronger returns at the corners.

Commissioner Friedmann confirmed that the Magpie's Restaurant building predates Cityhood and did not require discretionary approval from the City. He appreciated staff's alternate designs but felt the design as submitted eliminates Magpie's obtrusive and angular east wall.

Commissioner Tobias noted he was at the Planning Commission meeting when the project was reviewed and a constant element of the discussion had to do with what the Design Commission would think of the proposal. He believed flower beds in front of driveway flanking columns would be nice; vines could soften the building's look along Foothill blvd. He liked the façade the way it was designed with some sort of softening element.

Commissioner Hoopes stated that ever since the Trader Joe's fiasco, prior Design Commission advisory review is usually required before a project goes to the Planning Commission.

Director Stanley confirmed that the typical procedure is for major projects to have advisory review by the Design Commission in advance of review by the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Roberts liked some of Mr. Cantrell's suggested direction; the problem is a lack of recession for the windows on the front elevation. The façade needs to be broken up; this could be accomplished by stepping back the mid-section of the building. This would help better define the driveway entry and break up the façade's massing; introduction of awnings could help too. He felt the angled corner sq. ft. is useless and validates the argument for additional building setback at certain points.

Chairman Vavoulis noted that the objective was to provide direction to the Planning Commission regarding the design of the building and its setbacks. He also preferred the design as submitted with subtle changes to soften the front façade.

Commissioner Tobias agreed and liked the idea of recessing the central portion of the building.

Commissioner Friedmann again noted that the building as submitted negates the angled massing issue with Magpie's Restaurant.

Commissioner Hoopes felt that the addition of awnings on the front elevation was critical to improving the look of the building.

Consultant Cantrell felt that the rendering is very complementary to the project. Setting the 2nd-floor back is not the only issue. There is still a massing and open space concern. Angling the storefronts back within the existing space could accomplish the desired diminishing effect.

Director Stanley stated that code won't allow doors to open across property lines and that the awnings will need an encroachment permit.

Commissioner Hoopes reaffirmed the need for awnings.

Commissioner Roberts noted that the front façade needs lighting to dissuade internally lit signs.

Applicant Gary Zentmyer stated that internally lit signs within the Old Town District are not allowed. Public Works was agreeable to planters in the right-of-way given the considerable width of the sidewalk. He felt awnings could be similarly allowed.

Chairman Vavoulis encouraged direction from the Commission for changes needed at this time. He felt overall it was a beautiful building that needed only minor changes/refinements.

Commissioner Roberts liked the rear tower, but desired to see it refined slightly. He noted it was a great focal point as viewed traveling west along Foothill Blvd.

Chairman Vavoulis noted that the Planning Commission's main issue was the building's front setback.

Commissioner Hoopes was fine with the building as currently located. Pushing back the center section 18"-24" and installing front planters will do the trick.

Mr. Zentmyer requested endorsement from the Design Commission for a front setback of less than 5 feet.

Director Stanley clarified that specific direction to the Planning Commission was desired at this time.

Mr. Zentmyer explained that he collects old picture postcards of downtown main streets and these were the inspiration for the project. He preferred an envelope up to sidewalk and wants to work within it.

Commissioner Friedmann acknowledged Mr. Zentmyer's objective, but noted that some relief is needed to break up the front façade.

Consultant Cantrell cautioned that the commitment from Public Works regarding the front planters was not verified and could change.

Commissioner Tobias suggested that direction to the Planning Commission at this time include recessing the mid-section of the building and softening the façade.

Director Stanley explained that the item could be continued to the next meeting in order to discuss it with the project architect, who was not in attendance.

Chairman Vavoulis questioned if the appearance of additional setback could be accomplished through subtle design changes.

Consultant Cantrell stated that the Commission has already agreed that recessing the center section was desired.

The Commission agreed that the architect needed to be present for further discussion.

Consultant Cantrell still believed there was a massing issue with the NW corner of the building and how it relates with the Magpie's façade.

The Commission preferred the plan as submitted since Magpie's east wall would be blocked and no longer visible.

M/S/C Hoopes/Roberts to continue the item to the next meeting for discussion with the architect. Unanimous 5-0.

B. Design Review 10-01; 555 Foothill Blvd.; Wells Fargo; new wall and monument signs. Planner Clarke gave an overview of the new sign program in accord with the staff report.

Commissioner Tobias noted that the signs show brown backgrounds and inquired if actual color/material samples were provided.

Commissioner Hoopes questioned which color was being used for the monument sign. He confirmed that the color renderings don't match the actual colors proposed.

Commissioner Friedmann questioned if the darker red could still accommodate the stage coach logo.

Applicant Ed Steinbach noted that Wells Fargo is no longer using the stagecoach logo.

Commissioner Hoopes noted that a lighter red could accommodate the logo.

Commissioner Tobias thought a red logo on a darker field might work.

With regard to the monument sign there was consensus to use the darker red color as submitted with no end caps to ensure that the sign would be one color.

Commissioner Roberts did not believe that internal illumination was needed for the wall sign. He preferred black returns for the wall sign.

Commissioner Tobias questioned use of a bronze'ish' color for directional signs.

Planner Clarke responded that these were 'incidental' signs not typically reviewed by the Commission.

Commissioner Roberts commented that staff could approve the color after a sample was submitted.

M/S/C Hoopes/Tobias to approve the monument sign with dark red vinyl for faces, end cap and top as submitted; base strip of sign as submitted; wall sign as submitted without internal illumination; clearance and directional signs as submitted with color sample to be verified by staff. Unanimous 5-0.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS: There was no other business.

IX. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Tobias felt there was a need to work/coordinate better with the Planning Commission on major projects.

Commissioner Friedmann confirmed that directives and guidelines within the Foothill Blvd. Master Plan are discussed during the initial stages of commercial projects.

Commissioner Roberts mentioned that the streetscape guide is almost complete and Public Works has been very cooperative throughout the process.

Commissioner Hoopes remarked that the format of the Design Commission meetings can be a little intimidating and felt that more informal reviews, discussions, etc. were more appropriate in certain cases.

Chairman Vavoulis noted that study sessions can be held when needed.

X. COMMENTS FROM STAFF:

Planner Gjolme noted that Jiffy Lubes sign and building refurbishment project was pulled from the agenda in order to remedy outstanding landscaping issues prior to processing the request. Full compliance was anticipated within the next two weeks.

XI. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m.