

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON JULY 15, 2010**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Vavoulis called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.
- II. **ROLL:** Present were Commissioners Hoopes, Moldafsky, Roberts, Planners Gjolme and Clarke, Consulting architect Cantrell and Director of Community Development Stanley. Commissioner Tobias arrived at 7:34 a.m.
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Flag Salute was recited.
- IV. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** There were no comments.
- V. **CONSENT CALENDAR:**
 - A. **Minutes** - July 1, 2010 meeting. The minutes were continued to the September 2, 2010 meeting.
- VI. **CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS:**
 - A. **Design Review 10-12;** Henry's Market; 920 Foothill Blvd.; review of new grocery store.

Planner Cantrell gave an overview of the design changes since the last meeting which primarily included revisions to the roof components. He acknowledged that the side gables still have problematic exposure to the west, but regarded the overall presentation favorably and felt that a positive recommendation to the Planning Commission was possible at this time.

Commissioner Roberts clarified that the two side gables and their lack of respective depth was the issue according to Mr. Cantrell.

Chairman Vavoulis confirmed that outstanding design issues would come back for final review at a later date and did not need to be completely resolved at this stage.

Commissioner Moldafsky agreed with staff that the side gables needed to be better integrated with the building.

Commissioner Tobias thought the issue had been addressed and adequately resolved through extension of the gables as currently proposed.

Jim Cary - Project architect - referred the Commission and staff to exhibit 5 which showed the problem with further extension of the gables due to the arch of the existing roof and the resulting "bow string" interference. Page 4 showed how the gables had been extended back as far as possible. Any further extension and they would need to be clipped at the intersection with the main roof.

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Commissioner Tobias inquired if the lower portion of the roof could be painted to match the new gables. He strongly felt the two components needed to blend better.

Commissioner Hoopes commented that the issue was mainly apparent from overhead, not at street level.

Commissioner Tobias called the Commission's attention to the photo that showed Foothill Blvd. and the building as viewed from the west, and explained that the roof would be partially visible considering the street's rising course to the west.

Mr. Cary stated that there would be no view issue from the east, but acknowledged partial visibility from longer distances to the west. The Problem is the design and age of the building and trying to integrate the new construction.

Commissioner Moldafsky questioned what vertical distance needed to be shielded in order to block views of the roof.

Mr. Cary felt a parapet 4-5 feet in height would be sufficient.

Commissioner Roberts felt a combination of screening and/or working with the colors could solve the problem. He thanked the applicant for the plans and visual aids.

Commissioner Tobias commented that the revisions work pretty well. The deeper front gable as viewed from the south was a huge improvement.

Mr. Cary noted that keeping the gable in its current location draws attention away from the loading dock to the west and keys in with the main entrance to the east.

Chairman Vavoulis acknowledged that there was consensus to move project forward.

Mr. Cary noted the widened concrete areas and stops near the entry and loading zone. He also commented on a thinner planter near the handicap parking area to provide more efficient backup space for vehicles.

Commissioner Hoopes confirmed that efforts to add some depth to the north and south gables would be made before the next review.

Commissioner Roberts believed that added gable depth would preclude the interpretation as 'short facades'. Screening of the roof was key at this point and needed further analysis.

Commissioner Roberts also noted the amount of stucco proposed and stressed the importance of the colors that would be used.

Mr. Cary responded that subdued earth tones in an appropriate palette are proposed.

Commissioner Roberts questioned if offsite trees along Foothill Blvd. could assist in screening the roof and thought this idea was worth further exploration.

Consulting Architect Cantrell stated that staff will provide a summary of the Design Commission's action to the Planning Commission in conjunction with their review of the project.

Commission Hoopes noted the importance of establishing sight lines to determine where street trees need to be installed in order to effectively buffer the building.

M/S/C Tobias/Hoopes to recommend approval with further refinement to the side gables; stop sign improvements as shown; tree screening in the Foothill Blvd median and/or ROW, with sight line analysis to maximize buffering of the roof as viewed from Foothill Blvd. Approved 5-0.

VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. Design Review 10-13; Vons/Plaza de La Canada; 935 Foothill Blvd.; review of new sign program.

Consultant Cantrell explained the prior approval history of the project and noted that the main wall signs were grandfathered. The individual shop tenant signs were conceptual placeholders and appropriate as designed and located. The monument signs were the main issue, since they did not conform to the Commission's prior direction, most notably integration with the street walls. Direction from the Commission on several issues was sought at this time, as was input from the applicant.

Commissioner Tobias inquired why staff's overall understanding of the project was not clearer at this point. He clarified that the Vons wall signs are new and that the TJ Maxx sign was moved up several feet.

Consultant Cantrell responded that certain project components were still ambiguous and clarification/intent was needed from the applicant.

Commissioner Roberts stated that the Vons wall signs were new and verified that matte finishes are typically required for channel letters.

Per direction from Chairman Vavoulis, applicant Jonathan Mitteri from Cen Source confirmed that new signs would simply 'swap out' the existing signs.

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Applicant Wesley Fieldhouse corrected Mr. Mitteiri and explained that the existing TJ Maxx sign had been moved up on the Façade and that the Vons wall signs were new.

Commissioner Tobias expressed frustration with seemingly misleading answers to straightforward questions posed.

Mr. Mittieri stated that the existing wall signs had been relocated but that new materials were not used.

Commissioner Roberts questioned this and commented that the Vons signs, which include bright red faces and returns, were new.

Commissioner Tobias felt that an inspection of the Vons wall signs would confirm that they were indeed new signs.

Staff commented that the existing TJ Maxx sign was moved up on the south elevation of the building and that the Vons wall signs on the south and west elevations were new signs.

Mr. Fieldhouse confirmed this.

Commissioner Roberts questioned if a non-conforming sign retained its grandfathered status if it was moved.

Mr. Cantrell believed this was the case.

Mr. Cantrell clarified that relocation of a sign is not permitted and that certain elements may need a Variance pending further review by staff.

Director of Community Development Stanley confirmed that relocation of a non-conforming wall sign would likely require a Variance.

Mr. Fieldhouse noted that the TJ Maxx sign was raised to maintain visibility given the horizontal span of the new trellis on the south elevation.

Mr. Cantrell noted that a Variance for a third monument sign would likely be sought and input from the Commission with regard to the oversize wall signs should be given at this time.

Commissioner Tobias did not feel that a discussion of Variance review for the signs was appropriate at this stage. He felt the Design Commission's review should take place in the absence of possible review by the Planning Commission and should focus only on design. He also thought both wall signs were too large in their current form.

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Mr. Cantrell stated that subjective input from the Design Commission is always sought for project's needing further review by the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Roberts stated that refurbishing the existing signs during continued operation of the market was not necessarily inappropriate. However, guidance to the applicant in terms of what would ultimately be installed was important.

The Commission inquired about the status of the Conrad's wall sign.

Applicant Wesley Fieldhouse stated that the Conrad's sign had not been changed nor was any change proposed at this time. He noted that the intent of today's meeting was to receive input on the proposed monument signs.

Commissioner Hoopes stated that it is very difficult to give direction based on the quality of the submittal, in particular the monument signs, which have no relationship with the planter walls per the previous direction of the Commission. At this stage, a complete revision is necessary for review at a later date.

Chairman Vavoulis agreed and noted there was consensus from the Commission with regard to the monument signs.

Commissioner Tobias inquired about the possibility of Variance approval and if the item was scheduled for said review by the Planning Commission.

Director Stanley responded that a formal Variance request had yet to be submitted and that the Design Commission's input would be included as part of the review.

Commissioner Tobias inquired about the treatment of other Vons projects. He was troubled with the painted wainscoting along the buildings and felt it looked cheap. No other Vons projects he has visited seem to have used this method.

Director Stanley interjected and noted that the discussion was trailing away from the sign issue.

Commissioner Tobias restated his opposition to a third monument sign at the north parking lot since access to the center via the originally proposed breezeway is not provided.

Mr. Fieldhouse informed the Commission that the north parking lot had a monument sign that has since been removed and the intent would be to simply replace it at a later date.

Commissioner Tobias commented that the needed integration between the Foothill street walls and new sign was completely lacking.

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Mr. Fieldhouse stated that the signs would be stone and stucco to match the street walls.

Commissioner Tobias clarified that only the bases of the proposed signs had any correlation with the street walls, which were to be entirely stone. He stressed this point and reaffirmed that the street walls would not be a stone/stucco mixture, but rather entirely stone.

Mr. Fieldhouse and staff confirmed this.

He felt the monument signs should be stone as well, with pinned letters and external lighting.

Commissioner Roberts suggested minimizing the number of tenants on the monument sign along Foothill Blvd. He prepared a graphic showing a sign concept with recessed fields with "Vons" on the forward field and "TJ Maxx" and "Rite Aid" recessed on the secondary field.

Mr. Fieldhouse stated that the Foothill Blvd. sign included the three main tenants and had space for a possible fourth tenant in the future.

Commissioner Roberts believed the fourth tenant space was problematic and lent to visual crowding within the sign field. He thought the sign should include only three tenants and should allocate more field space to Vons and TJ Maxx given that they are the major tenants.

Consultant Cantrell inquired about adding the site's address to the monument sign.

Mr. Fieldhouse explained that the center has a dozen addresses and did not know how this could be accomplished.

Commissioner Roberts did not think address numbers should be part of the monument sign, but noted other locations, including the street wall, which could possibly be used for a range of addresses.

Commissioner Roberts was hopeful that the Conrad's sign would be refurbished at some point as part of the overall sign program.

Mr. Fieldhouse stated that the individual tenants are encouraged to refurbish their signs as part of their lease agreements.

Commissioner Hoopes felt that forming a subcommittee to guide the applicant might be appropriate at this time.

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Commissioners Moldafsky and Roberts volunteered for the subcommittee.

M/S/C Roberts/Hoopes to continue the project to a date uncertain to allow subcommittee review and revisions as needed. Unanimous.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS: There was no other business.

IX. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Moldafsky commented on the appearance of the cinderblock wall at Big Lots and was hopeful it could be upgraded / refurbished.

Commissioner Tobias restated his disappointment with the painted wainscoting at Vons.

X. COMMENTS FROM STAFF:

Director Stanley acknowledged the August break. He mentioned that Commissioner Roberts and staff would be meeting at Ralph's to discuss street trees and relocation of the approved monument sign.

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 a.m.