

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON JULY 21, 2016**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Moldafsky called the meeting to order at 7:34a.m.
- II. **ROLL:** Present were Commissioners Balcazar, Hoopes and King.
- III. **SWEARING IN OF COMMISSIONER FUELLING:** Commissioner Fuelling was absent. Swearing in to take place at next meeting on 9/1/2016.
- IV. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Flag Salute was recited.
- V. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** There were none.
- VI. **CONSENT CALENDAR:**
 - A. Minutes – 4/7/2016 Meeting: M/S/C King/Hoopes to adopt the minutes as submitted. Unanimous 4-0.

VII. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. **Design Review 13-18;** Hill Street Café; 1004 Foothill Blvd.; continued review of signage, colors and landscaping in conjunction with approved restaurant expansion and remodeling.

Planner Gjolme explained that the primary entitlement and review for the restaurant expansion and remodeling was complete and this was a follow-up review pertaining to signage and landscaping.

Per the Commission's direction, an expanded patio plan detailing all proposed landscaping, including creation of expanded planter areas to the east and west to accommodate relocated Brisbane box trees, has been prepared. In addition, more detailed and consistent plans for the new monument and wall signs were provided. The signs now provide precise design detail as well as individual letter and overall size calculations. The location of the monument sign and its footing are clearly shown and demonstrate adequate separation from the tree in the westerly planter.

Rear planters have been diversified for both Brisbane box and Chinese Pistache trees. The plan includes notes on possible selection of better trees for shading. The landscape architect is in attendance and recommendations for enhancements to the plan were welcomed.

Planner Gjolme commended the owner and applicant Binny Um for their voluntary effort to remove two non-conforming signs; the roof-top sign on the restaurant and the longstanding pole sign.

In staff's opinion, the Commission's prior direction has been responded to effectively. Positive findings and final project approval were recommended.

There were no questions for staff from the Commission.

Chairman Moldafsky opened the public hearing.

Bron Ruf, Moss Associates, noted that his biggest concern were the Brisbane box trees since they weren't a good shade tree. He also felt that new trees would be far better than transplanted trees to the front when considering mortality rate and cost. He preferred Platanus Acerifolia Bloodgood.

Commissioner Hoopes confirmed that Sycamores could substitute for the Brisbane box tree.

Mr. Ruf noted that this would be a better parking lot shade tree.

Commissioner King recalled that one of the reasons for moving the Brisbane tree was that it wouldn't become too large, but would frame the side of the building nicely.

Chairman Moldafsky added that alternative species could be selected at a later date and reviewed by staff or the Commission.

Mr. Ruf felt that Western Sycamores would work well since they are shapely and upright.

Commissioner Hoopes liked the idea of Sycamores, in particular, along the west side of the building.

Commissioner Balcazar noted that the Brisbane box trees were only 4-5 years old and could transplant well.

Mr. Ruf noted that this would be an extensive process given the box size of these trees.

Chairman Moldafsky restated that the landscape issue is fairly simple and could be left to the discretion of the landscape architect, with staff review and approval upon selection of final tree type.

Commissioner Hoopes asked about the allowance of alternate trees in the parking lot.

Mr. Ruf again felt that better selections than the Brisbane box were possible.

The Commission was amenable to a revised tree palette for the parking lot as well, again subject to staff confirmation.

Commissioner Hoopes noted a minor concern with the wall sign's halo effect on the yellow colored fascia and felt legibility could be compromised at night given the lack of contrast.

Planner Gjolme noted that the elevation shown on the screen did not represent the façade's true color. He suggested that Mr. Um respond further to the concern.

Binny Um, project designer, noted that the actual color for the wall would be darker and can be adjusted if needed. The halo lighting could also be adjusted if needed.

Commissioner Hoopes stated that, historically, the Commission would see actual color samples here, make selections and review larger panels of those colors to be approved on-site if necessary. He felt that this project warranted that type of review for colors.

Chairman Moldafsky recommended that a subcommittee be formed to review colors on site at a later date.

Commissioner Hoopes added that the subcommittee could review revisions to the landscape as well.

Commissioner King and Balcazar were appointed to said subcommittee.

M/S/C Hoopes/King to approve the project subject to subcommittee review and approval of final project colors and endorsement of the final landscape plan. Unanimous 4-0.

B. Design Review 15-17; La Canada Union 76; 1540 Foothill Blvd.; pump island canopy and station remodeling.

Consulting architect Cantrell gave an overview of the request since last meeting where conceptual review/approval was granted. Today's review was to assess & confirm conditions of approval imposed at that meeting. Said conditions pertained to canopy moldings, lighting and design details.

Mr. Cantrell reiterated that internally illuminated signs were not allowed on this property given its location in the City's Old Town District. An opaque sign face with halo lighting could be allowed but staff initially resisted this since the site has adequate ambient light at night. However, given a number of other

considerations, staff reconsidered this and is now amenable to it. The detail for the column stonework edges has been clarified through notation of corner pieces. A 4-foot height limit continues to be recommended by staff. The color palette for the station works very well and introduces better proportion.

Mr. Cantrell felt that project approval was possible, with conditions, to satisfy outstanding design details as of yet not specified.

Chairman Moldafsky and Commissioner Hoopes had no questions.

Commissioner King asked about the enlargement of the top fascia along the north and west side of the station.

Planner Gjolme responded that he and consultant Cantrell felt it introduced better color and proportion. It also allowed for an increase in height to ledgestone wall to the west.

Ahmad Ghaderi introduced himself and stated he was assisting the applicants. He felt that the background trim/panel around the sign was appropriate and necessary to allow for halo lighting of the '76' disc signs.

Commissioner Hoopes reiterated the amount of ambient light at the corner and questioned whether the signs needed to be lit at all.

Mr. Ghaderi informed the Commission that 76 Corporate requires it and that the halo proposal has already been approved by Corporate.

Charlie Kamar, station owner, stated that he had discussed sign/lighting options with the Commission and referred staff's original design for the disc and back lighting, which had been endorsed at the previous meeting.

Planner Gjolme noted the uniqueness of the Old Town District, but encouraged the Commission to find a solution to allow for halo lighting given the approvals granted for other canopy disc signs on other stations in town.

The Commission and the applicant discussed several design options to allow for halo lighting while achieving the best design and appearance for the necessary backing and canopy. A concept sketch was produced as a result.

Commissioner Balcazar, addressing the stonework for the columns, stated that she preferred a 4-foot height for the stone base.

Further discussion of the design and proportion of the canopy disc signs ensued.

Taleen Kamar, applicant, requested approval of a 4 foot, six-inch height range for the column stone so some flexibility would be allowed upon installation to make sure it looked right.

Commissioner Balcazar liked the colors chosen and appreciated the thoughtful coordination.

Mrs. Kamar gave an overview of the palette with certain samples.

The Commission endorsed the overall palette.

The Commission discussed the color and thickness of the canopy trim.

Chairman Moldafsky inquired about the possibility of a continuance in order to finalize remaining details, in particular, the sign lighting and needed canopy adjustments.

Mrs. Kamar stated her hope for an approval today, noting that another continuance would delay the project and result in additional costs.

Planner Gjolme suggested formation of a subcommittee. Staff could review and approve the remaining items at a later date, subject to confirmation by the subcommittee.

The Commission agreed with this idea and appreciated staff's insight. A subcommittee of Commissioner Hoopes and King was formed accordingly.

M/S/C Hoopes/King to approve the project subject to staff and subcommittee review and approval of the final canopy column stone height and final design of the canopy signs, backing and molding. Approved 4-0.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. **Design Review 16-09;** McDonald's; 449 Foothill Blvd.; exterior façade changes and remodeling of existing restaurant.

Consulting architect Cantrell gave a brief history of the site and restaurant. Staff had suggestions for the design as submitted, mainly deletion of the peaked roof to the rear above the play area and introduction of a new cornice. Extension of the entry roof to reinforce and strengthen the main entry was also regarded as necessary. The brick wainscot was favorably regarded since use of ledgestone seems to be proliferating. The entry cornice as seen from the east was woefully inadequate and needed increased depth. A new cornice with a deepened parapet was strongly recommended. Project colors and materials were acceptable as presented. Mr. Cantrell noted that the existing building was not in compliance with regard to visible roof-top equipment. The applicant is willing

to address this issue as part of the project and may need to raise the parapet to screen the equipment. The applicant will address staff's suggestions but wishes to retain the peaked roof.

The Commission had no questions for staff.

Chris Stanton, applicant, addressed Mr. Cantrell's comments. The peaked roof accommodates the play structure's air conditioning equipment. Removal would require significant mechanical revamping. He agreed that the front elevation is deceptive; noting the significant distance between peak and front parapet. The parapet will be raised to screen the equipment. He preferred to keep the entry roof segmented to keep focus on the entry double doors. Mr. Stanton disagreed with the introduction of the new front cornice, stating it would look dated. The brick wainscot is damaged and in disrepair. He preferred to continue the façade stucco down to the base of the building and displayed revised plans with the brick wainscot removed.

Commissioner King asked how high the parapet would need to be raised to buffer the equipment.

Mr. Stanton was not sure, and would need to do a new site/building section to verify.

Commissioner King asked about the consistency of materials, noting that if the wainscot was removed, what would happen with the roof tile.

Mr. Stanton responded that the roof tile could be repainted to coordinate colors. A number of solutions were available.

Deputy Director of Community Development Koleda informed the Commission and applicant that the Fire Dept. has new requirements with regard to parapet height; they are now limited to 4 feet on two sides of the building. This limit could affect the viability of screening the rooftop equipment.

Mr. Stanton responded that if the parapets cannot be adequately raised, an alternative screening method for rooftop equipment will be provided.

Commissioner Hoopes prefaced his comments with a statement about the character of La Canada Flintridge, describing it as a small town in the foothills at the base of the mountains with traditional design and flavor and an abundance of trees. He agreed that the existing building is very old and the design definitely needs to be looked at. However, the proposal has a very industrial look, with the front elevation reminiscent of service bays at an auto shop. The design includes sheer walls up to 20 feet in height with no relief. It is very contemporary and modern. He preferred a design that was more traditional in scale and 'flavor'.

He felt that the applicant had done a very good job for a contemporary building in terms of design, but did not think it was the right direction for the City.

Commissioner Balcazar acknowledged and understood Commissioner Hoopes comments, but liked the design and preferred retention of the peaked roof. She felt the applicant had done a good job, all things considered.

Commissioner King also understood Commissioner Hoopes points, but liked the design. She felt the peaked roof keeps the design whimsical. Mrs. King acknowledged that some of the elements needed to be softened, given the location of McDonalds, with Firestone to the west and the strip mall across the street, which presents itself as very strong and unmodulated. This design is much better. In summary, she felt the design worked in relation to the setting.

Commissioner Hoopes agreed that the project is within what could best be described as the “industrial end” of the town.

Chairman Moldafsky also liked the design. He felt it works in this part of town. Moreover, he wasn’t sure what a more traditional design for a McDonald’s would look like.

The Commission discussed alternatives to soften and improve the front elevation. Canopy lighting was also discussed.

Chairman Moldafsky asked if concept approval was possible.

Planner Gjolme responded that action was possible depending on the Commission’s level of comfort with the submittal.

Commissioner Hoopes added that his evaluation had changed somewhat given the comments about the project’s location within the ‘industrial end’ of town.

The Commission was comfortable with the concept and direction of the project at this point.

Commissioner Hoopes asked about the availability of actual color and material samples.

Mr. Stanton responded that they will be provided at a later date.

The Commission had no other questions.

Commissioner Hoopes stated that lighting was important and needed to be pinned down at the next review.

Commissioner Balcazar left the meeting at 9:40 am.

M/S/C Hoopes/King to conceptually approve the project subject to revised elevations demonstrating a raised and deepened parapet to block view of equipment or alternative screening method; preparation of a site section to the west from Gould Avenue; color and material board; landscape plan; signage package and exterior lighting specs in conjunction with final review. Approved 3-0.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS: there was no other business.

X. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner King thanked Commissioner Roberts, who was not in attendance, for his 19 years of service on the Design Commission.

Commissioner Hoopes enthusiastically agreed, noting that he had worked with Mr. Roberts for a very long time. He was very discouraged that he was not reelected to the Commission and felt the overall situation was handled in a poor manner.

Chairman Moldafsky agreed with Commissioner King and Hoopes' comments.

XI. COMMENTS FROM STAFF:

Planner Gjolme echoed the thoughts of the Commission with regard to Commissioner Roberts.

XII. ADJOURNMENT:

M/S/C King/Moldafsky to adjourn at 9:50 a.m. Approved 3-0.