

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD ON DECEMBER 17, 2015**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Vice Chairman Hoopes called the meeting to order at 7:36 a.m.
- II. **ROLL:** also present were Commissioners King and Roberts. Commissioner Balcazar arrived at 7:41 am. Chairman Moldafsky was absent.
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Flag Salute was recited.
- IV. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** There were no comments.
- V. **CONSENT CALENDAR:** Minutes: 11-19-15. Approved 3-0-1. King recused herself as she was not present at the 11-19-15 meeting.
- VI. **CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS:** There were no public hearings.
- VII. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

A. Design Review 13-02; Hill Street Café; 1004 Foothill Blvd.; preliminary review of restaurant expansion and remodeling, outdoor dining patio and parking lot landscaping.

Consulting architect Cantrell gave an overview of the project and presented the plans for the proposed patio addition to the existing restaurant building. He explained that a CUP was required for the 1,000 square foot addition and outdoor dining patio in the front of the business. He explained that the intent of the meeting was to discuss a concept design for both the restaurant building as well as the new landscaping with the Commission in order to obtain their direction for the project architect to use.

Mr. Cantrell explained that landscaping and parking items were discussed at great length at past Planning Commission meetings for the project. He indicated that Chinese Pistache trees could be included in the design. He said that the applicant did volunteer to remove the pole and roof sign and plans to replace it with a code compliant wall and monument sign would be submitted for review at a future date. Mr. Cantrell indicated that a flat roof is proposed for the project and that high windows are proposed which will add to the view of the surrounding mountains. A pitched trellis is also proposed and will match the slope of the roof. A number of roof details, to include molding, fascia boards, and entry way treatments remain and will be presented at a future date to the Commission.

Commissioners King and Roberts inquired about the landscaping proposed in front of the patio and asked if there were renderings that depict the proposed landscaping.

Planner Gjolme clarified that the original request by the applicant to the Planning Commission was to extend the patio dining area to the west and thus eliminate up to six parking spaces for the restaurant. The Planning Commission could not justify a parking reduction and as a result, the applicant amended the project to expand the dining area to the north. The CUP was amended to reintroduce the patio to the north. The rendering that the Design Commission has before it at this meeting is reflective of the proposed massing of the project and does not include a new front patio concept. The landscape plans do show landscape within a landscape planter along the front of the patio.

Vice Chairman Hoopes asked about landscaping proposed to be planted inside the wall at Foothill Blvd. as it appears that there are shrubs called out on the landscape plan.

Commissioner King said that it appeared that groundcover was proposed.

Mr. Cantrell stated that he believed that Rosemary was proposed to be planted to spill over the planter wall.

The Applicant's representative, Binny Um, spoke and indicated that the front side of the wall will consist of a 4-foot stone wall and 2-foot glass barrier with planting all around in front. The width of the planter is approximately two feet.

Commissioner Roberts asked for further clarification of the landscaping and about the proposed width of the planter and indicated that there appears to be a footing that would reduce available planting area. He expressed concern over the landscape area being further and further reduced as the project is constructed.

The applicant said that he could use an "L" shaped footing to accommodate landscaping.

Vice Chairman Hoopes asked if there was a detail which indicates that the planter wall will be cut through.

Mr. Cantrell discussed the massing of the proposed addition and indicated that the design went before the Planning Commission several times.

Commissioner Roberts asked about the amount of landscaping to be placed in the planter. Mr. Um stated that the width of the landscape planter is 2 feet wide. Mr. Roberts asked if the proposed landscaping would grow to hide the planter wall.

Vice Chairman Hoopes suggested that the footing for the wall be "L"-shaped as opposed to S-shaped. The Vice Chairman said that a general condition requiring the "L" shape should be included in the conditions of approval for the project.

Mr. Cantrell reiterated that the project concept is being presented to the Commission today, rather than final detailed plans.

Mr. Um clarified that the landscape planter is large enough to accommodate a tree.

Commissioner Roberts expressed that he was concerned about the amount of trees to be planted.

Director of Community Development, Robert Stanley, said that the Commission could modify the Chinese Pistache tree that is proposed if they wished.

Mr. Cantrell indicated that the east driveway would be most visible. He said that he would prefer that a highly visible tree be installed.

Director Stanley asked about the amount of shade canopy a large Chinese Pistache would provide.

Commissioner Roberts asked if a street tree was required.

Mr. Cantrell stated that staff will look into requiring this.

Commissioner Roberts asked if the planter could use private property and part of the right-of-way, similar to what was done at Bank of America and Ralph's.

Commissioner Roberts asked if a barrier would be required to be installed to prevent a car that might crash into the building.

Director Stanley stated that requiring this could add liability, potentially onto the City if required.

Commissioner King asked if the applicant can explore changing the angle of the addition's roof. Perhaps the roof could be raised or the massing could be changed.

Mr. Um said that he would speak with the property owner about this.

Commissioner Roberts suggested that three Brisbane-box trees be installed and the proposed planter wall notch in to accommodate the trees.

Commissioner Roberts said that the new patio dining area should be designed so that it is an obvious place to dine and focal place on the Blvd. Placement should also enable one to view the signage easily.

Mr. Um offered to place additional landscaping to the east and west portions of the planter area in addition to trees.

Commissioner King indicated that the patio layout is tight.

Commissioner Roberts suggested that the patio bench articulation be studied.

Pat Anderson of the Chamber of Commerce spoke in support of the project. She asked about the construction timeline and whether there would be a conflict with the Fiesta Day Parade that is scheduled to occur at the end of November 2016 as well as with the celebration of the City's 40th milestone birthday of its incorporation.

Vice Chairman Hoopes closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Roberts stated that the proposed architecture is important as the restaurant building will abut both a historic building to the east and the bookstore to the west. Refinement and details are critical given that the building is situated at the gateway to the City off of Angeles Crest highway. Architectural detail and layers should be incorporated into the design in order to create interest.

Commissioner King stated that she prefers the City's alternate design proposed. She stated that articulation is important and that the trellis should have landscaping such as vines. She expressed that the upper windows could be larger in order to provide a better view from inside. Additional molding can be installed. Aesthetically pleasing architectural details should be included rather than just stucco, alone.

Vice Chairman Hoopes suggested that at the south portion of the proposed addition that a mountain-like design be built rather than a square box design. He said that there should be contrast between the detail of the shade structure and the proposed "box" design behind it.

Mr. Hoopes stated that the design of the windows and doors should be looked at in order to soften the current, "harsh" looking design.

Mr. Hoopes believed that the City's Alternate Design does not address the harsh massing. He prefers more traditional design elements and believes that the neighboring building design should be considered when designing the subject building. For instance the neighboring bookstore has traditional elements.

Vice Chairman Hoopes opened up the public hearing.

The Applicant's representative, Mr. Um, stated that the original theme of the existing building contains stone veneer. Changing the roof shape overall will not be in keeping with the existing building.

Commissioner Roberts stated that the existing building is not attractive which presents a challenge. Adding articulation details will help. He suggested wrapping the trellis along the west side and hiding the existing building with a nice patio. Greenscape at the back side of the building should help provide clean lines. He suggested leaving the existing building alone to the extent possible.

Staff and Director Stanley suggested that a sub-committee working with Binny Um might be productive. The Planning Commission had concerns that they left up to the Design Commission to discuss. Vice Chairman Hoopes stated that a subcommittee might not be necessary. Commissioner King and staff recommended that the architect go back and work on further refining the design.

Discussion ensued on what the next steps would be.

Commissioner Roberts suggested that buildings to the east and west of the subject property be included in the next design rendering.

It would be helpful in the future if minutes and comments of the Planning Commission be furnished for the Design Commission which will help them make a decision.

Mr. Um stated that he needs more direction on the roof design elements.

Commissioners Roberts & King indicated that they'd like to see the current building design minimized by disguising the back side of the building. The design does not necessarily need to be traditional. They also mentioned voluntary removal of the pole and roof sign and that the new signage should be considered at this time. Also, the large tree to the west could be removed to help soften the area.

Commissioner King suggested that Mr. Um continue to refine the design concept and include surrounding buildings in a rendering for better project context.

M/S/C Roberts/King to continue the item to a date uncertain. Approved 4-0.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS: Reopened the Consent Calendar to vote on the minutes of the Meeting of November 19, 2015.

IX. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS: Commissioner King commented that Taylor's restaurant has installed some new landscaping in front of their business, along Foothill Blvd. that may not be in compliance with their approval. She asked if this type of change has to go back to the Planning Commission for further review and approval.

X. COMMENTS FROM STAFF: Director Stanley wished the Commission a Happy Holiday and Happy New Year. He also introduced new staff, Lisa Brancheau, Sr. Management Analyst to the City and explained that she comes to the City after working with the City of Covina in various capacities including the Planning and Administration Departments.

Planner Gjolme recapped the Commission's achievements in 2015, noting that the following has been completed by the Design Commission over the past year:

21 Design Commission meetings were held

25 projects were reviewed and approved, including:

- Foothill and Gould shopping center façade, parking lot and signage improvements completed.
- The La Canada Imports sign and Code Enforcement case has been resolved.
- A new hydrogen fueling station at Arco has been approved and is largely completed.
- New business, Luna Grill, is slated to open their business within the Town Center. The business will feature an outdoor dining patio within the arcade area near the existing Caterpillar Kids business.
- Preliminary review of the Unocal canopy and station upgrades.

XI. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 a.m.