

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD MARCH 28, 2017**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Gunter called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Also present were Vice Chairman Hazen and Commissioners McConnell, and Oh. Commissioner Jain was absent.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Flag Salute was recited.

IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Comments were not offered.

V. REORDERING OF THE AGENDA

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Resolution 17-13; denying Variance 17-01 for excess signage at 449 Foothill Blvd as requested by McDonald's USA and Swain Signs.

Commissioner Oh asked Deputy City Attorney, Guerra, for clarification about reflecting the initial vote or denial.

Mr. Guerra said that it should be reflected in both the minutes and the action agenda.

M/S/C - McConnell/Hazen to approve the Resolution. Approved 4-0.

B. Minutes – 1/10/2017 PC meeting.

M/S/C – Gunter/McConnell to approve the minutes. Approved 4-0.

VII. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Hillside Development Permit 16-18/Second-floor Review 16-16/Variance 16-04/Tree Removal Permit 16-23; Architecture JHK/CHA and Associates; 2050 Hilldale Drive (APN 5807-013-090) Staff is recommending a continuance to recirculate the draft Negative Declaration.

Chairman Gunter asked if the item should be moved to a date certain or uncertain.

Director Stanley said that the item would need to be re-advertised and that it should be continued to a date uncertain.

The public hearing was not opened.

M/S/C – Gunter/McConnell to continue the item to a date uncertain. Approved 4-0.

B. Hillside Development Permit 13-14 (Amendment)/Second Floor Review 13-04 (Amendment)/Director's Misc. Review 16-42 (flat roof); McDonnell/Boynerian/Tejirian; 458 Noren Street

Planner Gjolme gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report.

Mr. Gjolme explained that the applicant's request for an amendment pertained mainly to the exterior design. He showed a site plan that indicated the height of the residence and the setbacks. He explained that the building configuration had not changed. Rear yard pool and deck improvements were shown which hang over the slope of the property. The configuration of the swimming pool had been elongated along a north-south direction.

Mr. Gjolme said that none of the original project setbacks, height, or orientation had changed. However, the exterior design has been altered to a more contemporary design. The roof structure has been redesigned to a lesser pitch and is subject to a flat roof review. There are deep overhangs that extend out along the sides. Vertical wood siding is also proposed. A 3-dimensional rendering was also shown that depicted the building's rustic and organic qualities. The two-story component set back along with landscaping remains consistent with 2013-14 approvals.

Mr. Gjolme compared the project's design with the more traditional style of neighboring houses. He explained that the revised design, though somewhat different, is reasonably compatible with the area. It is situated at the end of a cul-de sac.

Mr. Gjolme stated that he believed that positive findings could be made to support the project.

Staff put together a staff report with information from past approvals because Vice Chairman Hazen and Commissioner Oh were not on the Commission when the item was before the Planning Commission previously.

Commissioner McConnell asked that because the project is subject to hillside development and light reflective value (LRV) guidelines, will the proposed stucco color comply?

Mr. Gjolme said that he was not sure if the stucco proposed would comply with the guidelines.

Commissioner McConnell said that he was concerned about this.

Mr. Gjolme said that staff could add a condition addressing the concern.

Mr. Gjolme showed the past floor plan to the Commissioners. The approved first floor plan gained approval in 2014. The revised south-face now contains a four-foot recess and eliminated the conflict with the guideline pertaining to modulation at the first floor. It achieved greater consistency with the Hillside Ordinance.

A southeast-facing floor plan was shown and depicted increased modulation and recesses. The current submittal complies with current requirements better than the past submittal.

Commissioner McConnell asked if the light well was larger.

Mr. Gjolme said that the basement was reduced in size and is compliant with Building and Safety and meets required setbacks.

Vice Chairman Hazen asked if the front yard area meets the 50% landscaping requirement.

Mr. Gjolme said, "yes." He estimated that 56% of the front setback contained landscaping.

Commissioner Oh indicated that he knew a person that is associated with the project and asked if he needed to recuse himself.

Deputy City Attorney Guerra explained to Mr. Oh, that if he felt he could be objective, that he could remain.

Mr. Oh said that he felt he could be objective.

Mr. Guerra said, then he believed that Mr. Oh would be free to participate in the discussion.

Commissioner Oh asked if based on the last approval in 2014, if the permit expired in 2 years.

Mr. Gjolme said there is an extension of one year, until August 2017.

Chairman Gunter asked that conditions be placed in the approval as to why the conditions are an amendment.

Chairman Gunter had a question about the finished floor as reflected on Sheet A 3.0 and sheet A 4.0 of the submitted plans.

Director Stanley clarified that Section AA explained the item.

Mr. Gjolme indicated that 22 ½ feet is what is proposed and that any discrepancies will be addressed.

Chairman Gunter asked if any complaints had been received regarding the construction fence.

Director Stanley said that a complaint was received about the site not being secured.

The public hearing was opened.

Chairman Gunter explained to the audience how the public hearing portion of the meeting works.

Commissioner McConnell said that the current, original approval would still stand if the Commission did not approve the new design.

Speaker, Kevin McDonald, the attorney for the applicant, explained that the height was an issue because of the internal height within the building. He said that the new architect could speak to the proposed changes and that the goal is to fit the new design into the framework of the past approval. The flat roof review had to be submitted.

Speaker, architect, Jean Pierre Boladian, explained that approval for the redesign is requested because the pad would no longer be lowered. The arborist recommended that the basement be reduced by 1,000 square feet. The floor plan has been altered to address functional issues. Articulation of the massing was previously very boxy. The massing is now articulated and the footprint is pushed in and there is less square footage than what was allowed under the prior approval.

Mr. Boladian clarified that the stucco is more of a gray color than white and will comply with light reflective standards.

Speaker, Kevin McDonnell said that a time extension letter had been submitted into the record.

A letter was submitted by Sanjeev Sehgal, 368 Noren Street, thanking the City. Sanjeev Sehgal was pleased that three Oak trees would be saved and that their property value has increased. Building a new residence would increase property values in the neighborhood.

Speaker, Linda Pierce, lives nearby at 461 Noren Street. She said that she had concerns about the project, namely that she believed that the project would be out of scale with the rest of the street. She felt that the proposed amendment increases the bulky feel of the residence. She believed that the original design would take better advantage of mountain views. She felt that the design would put her mountain view at risk. She was also concerned about the proposed height. Ms. Pierce believed that the story poles show the bulkiness of the proposed expansion, especially at the southeast vantage point. She felt that the proposed roof line would appear to be looming. She was concerned about privacy. She was also concerned that her bedrooms that would face the subject property could be problematic and that lighting could be too obtrusive. Ms. Pierce expressed that she believed that the proposed project is over 200% larger than other buildings on the street.

Speaker, Mary Beth Eckerle, 413 Noren Street, said that she was concerned that the property looked vacant and unkempt. She felt that the proposed structure was too large and massive and could contribute to mansionization in the area. She believed that the proposal constituted a brand-new plan rather than an amendment.

Chairman Gunter explained that the proposed project fell within what was approved. He said that he did not believe the story poles precisely reflected the height and massing of the proposal.

Mr. McDonnell stated that the building envelope had been defined under the current approval. He said that breaking up of the roof line would result in the majority of the building being less than 22 ½ feet high. He believed that the concerns about the basement would be remedied through the hauling management plan that will be submitted.

Commissioner Gunter closed the public hearing.

Commissioner McConnell confirmed that the proposed project would be staying within the building footprint with regards to floor area and height.

Mr. Gjolme indicated that the second-floor envelope had changed minimally and that it met code requirements such as setbacks, etc.

Commissioner McConnell confirmed that the setbacks would be compliant.

Mr. Gjolme confirmed that they would be close to what was originally approved, both 18 feet.

Commissioner McConnell said that they present differently, namely, the planes.

Mr. Gjolme explained that the second-floor singular plane was different and that it did not retreat like the previous project.

Commissioner McConnell asked if the submission is for a residence, 24-feet in height.

Mr. Gjolme clarified that it is proposed to be 22 feet high from existing grade.

Chairman Gunter said that the previous proposal reflected a setback that is four inches closer in the setback.

Commissioner McConnell said that when he viewed the story poles and the plans that he read that it was in the same plane. He is concerned about the height and the view to the north. He said that he did not feel that the roof line violated any guidelines. He believed that the recessed roof line allows for more of a view. The Commission does not get into the aesthetics of a project. He recommended that the amendment be approved.

Vice Chairman Hazen said that he was not sure if he agreed with the proposed size of the building. He felt that to protect the existing scale of the neighborhood, that the excess landscaping be installed to screen the proposed residence.

Chairman Gunter asked Mr. Gjolme that proposed plant species be called out on landscaping plans and that they screen the proposed project.

Mr. Gjolme said that he would ensure this is complied with.

Director Stanley said that new landscaping will be subject to water efficient landscaping requirements.

Chairman Gunter said that if any changes come about, the project must return for Commission review again.

Director Stanley clarified that would be the case if the changes pertained to additional Building Code requirements needing to be being complied with.

Vice Chairman Hazen said that he could approve the project, but would ask that green-screening be installed along the north/south portion of the site.

Commissioner Oh said that he understood how the matter was decided in the past and that he would not challenge the prior approval. He said that he did not see a prevailing architectural style in the neighborhood and therefore, that the proposal is not out of character. He said he could make the findings to support the project.

Chairman Gunter said that he visited the site and is familiar with it. He said that the project meets Slope Factor Guidelines and is compliant with all guidelines. He expressed that he appreciated that the project was designed so that less grading was required during construction. He could appreciate that there are some property owners that are for and against the project. He was glad that the neighborhood was

involved and participating in the review process. He believed that the design was more in keeping with the neighborhood as opposed to the last design that was approved. Two-story homes are allowed in the City by right. He did express that he was very concerned about the proposed lighting and wanted to ensure that it would not be disruptive to the neighborhood. He would like the commissioners to require that no decorative lighting be placed on the proposed building.

Mr. Gjolme stated that a past project on Haverstock required an exterior lighting plan.

Chairman Gunter said that would be a good procedure to have in place; that an exterior lighting plan be submitted to staff for review.

Commissioner McConnell said that the landscape plan showed that there would be landscaping planted below the recess where a lightwell will be. He said that given that the proposed second-floor has been extended to the north portion of the property, that he is not sure if he would be comfortable approving the project. He felt that there is an unnecessary bump out which is not in keeping with the original second-floor footprint.

Commissioner Oh said that he would like to see if there is a policy to address this in the future.

Director Stanley said that the Updated Zoning Code will have changes to lighting requirements.

Commissioner McConnell said that it should be required that the LRV be met.

Mr. Gjolme said that a condition should be added requiring that the LRV be met.

Chairman Gunter said that Condition No. 33 should require that a lighting plan be submitted for Director review and approval specifically prohibiting on-building lighting.

M/S/C - Gunter/Hazen – voted on each request separately as follows: (1) Hillside Development Permit 13-14– approved 4-0. (2) Second Floor Review 13-04– approved 3-1. McConnell voted no. (3) Director’s Miscellaneous Review 16-42 – approved 3-1. McConnell voted no.

IX. REPORT OF DIRECTOR’S REVIEWS

A. Hillside Development Permit 16-41 (Dir.)/Director’s Misc. Review 17-04 (pool equipment); Chen; 740 Forest Green Drive: allowed a new infinity edge pool, associated retaining walls and pool equipment on a hillside lot.

B. Director’s Misc. Review 17-01 (SB); Hoppe/Chen; 803 Milmada Drive: allowed a 775 sq. ft. 1st-floor addition to encroach 1’-3” into the required west side

yard setback while maintaining the existing 7-foot west side setback of the existing residence.

Chairman Gunter asked Director Stanley if staff addressed where pool equipment should be located.

Director Stanley said, "yes."

X. OTHER BUSINESS –

There was none.

XI. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS –

There were none.

XII. COMMENTS FROM THE DIRECTOR –

Director Stanley informed the Commission that he would be on vacation during the next Planning Commission meeting.

Director Stanley informed the Commission that when tribes request consultation and possible mitigation of items when they believe that a project could impact them that a monitor will be required to be present on-site during excavation.

The Commissioners asked what tribe requests such accommodation.

Director Stanley said it is the San Gabrieleno Tribe. He said that they have trail routes throughout the City that extend throughout the San Gabriel Valley.

Director Stanley said that the Zoning Code review by staff and the consultant should be completed soon and the draft update should be presented to the Commission by Summer 2017.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT –

M/S/C – Oh/McConnell to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m. Approved – 4-0.