

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
OF THE
CITY OF LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE
HELD AUGUST 5, 2008**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Gelhaar called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL:

Present were Commissioners Curtis and Davitt, Vice Chair Hill and Chair Gelhaar.

Also present were Director of Community Development Stanley, Deputy City Attorney Vargas, Planner Gjolme and Planner Clarke.

Commissioner Cahill was absent.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Davitt led the salute to the flag.

IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Comments were not offered.

V. REORDERING OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was not reordered.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

The Consent Calendar consisted of the following items:

- A. July 8, 2008 meeting minutes

MOTION Vice Chair Hill moved and Commissioner Davitt seconded a motion to approve the Consent Calendar. The motion carried 4-0, Commissioner Cahill absent.

VII. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- A. Second-floor Review 08-07; 5121 Oakwood Avenue; Park:
Request to construct a code-compliant 5,177-sf, 2-story residence on a 17,150-sf lot. The project has been redesigned since the initial public hearing.

Planner Gjolme presented the staff report. He explained that the project was previously before the Commission but there was concern with massing and scale of the front elevation. He explained that the barrel tiles conflicted with the other design elements. He stated a new design was before the

Commission. He discussed the modifications to improve the overall design including removal of barrel tile and replacement with light-weight concrete tiles, introduction of stone work and refining of the window display. He stated the roof pitch had been increased which would eliminate three feet of vertical façade and lessen the overall profile. He stated the overall building height was reduced by approximately one foot. He stated a cottage style design was before the Commission. He discussed the efforts to dilute the stone work for a more subtle overall aesthetic. He discussed modifications to the north and rear elevations including removal of the second floor deck. He stated the balcony was still being proposed but was somewhat blocked by the gable which would reduce views of neighboring homes. He stated staff was not inclined to support the deck as proposed. He stated staff was appreciative of the efforts by the applicant but could not accept the overall scale as proposed. He stated a positive recommendation and findings were before the Commission. He stated the neighbors felt the overall massing was still too large and they would prefer reduction in size and increase front yard setback. He stated staff believed the design was cohesive and attractive and it was prepared to recommend positive findings.

In response to Chairman Gelhaar, Planner Gjolme discussed the plate heights.

Stacey Park, applicant, stated the height was to Code and similar to the neighboring properties. She discussed her efforts to work with her neighbors.

Chair Gelhaar stated there was a previous hearing at which there were many comments. He requested speakers not repeat themselves and limit themselves to new issues.

Holger Besch, 5128 Oakwood Avenue, thanked the Parks for addressing their concerns. He stated the only remaining concerns were the setback and lack of screening. He suggested additional screening be required, in addition to the home being shifted back five or six feet.

Betty Cole, 5118 Oakwood Avenue, stated they had purchased their home for the quaint neighborhood. She stated the revised project was very much improved from the original design. She suggested the home be set back further to increase the front yard for landscaping. She also requested a reduction in the height so it would fit better with the one story houses in the neighborhood.

Debra Van Deventer, 5112 Oakwood, acknowledged that the new proposed design was an improvement over the original design. She expressed dismay over the flat front, block shaped design. She stated the design was not

conducive with the neighborhood. She stated upper Oakwood was only 18 feet wide. She stated it was not a street, rather a country lane. She urged the Commission to consider the height of the proposed project and agreed with staff's recommendation of a 28 foot high house. She also requested the front yard setback be increased by 6 feet.

In response to Chair Gelhaar, Planner Gjolme explained that the average setbacks of the neighboring homes were 39 feet. He stated the assessor information indicated the street was 20 feet wide within a 32 foot right-of-way.

Chair Gelhaar closed the public hearing.

Vice Chair Hill expressed concern with the height, front yard setback and balcony. He stated the neighborhood was compact and the street was narrow. He questioned whether the house fit in with the neighborhood. He stated he was unable to make the finding that the two story design preserved the existing scale and character of the neighborhood. He stated he was also unable to find that the two story design protected public views, privacy and property values of the neighborhood. He stated he was hesitant to cast a yes vote with conditions. He stated it was inappropriate to design the house for the applicant. He stated the design was much improved but was not there yet.

Commissioner Davitt agreed that the project was improved. He stated the Code allowed for second story homes. He stated he could make the necessary findings and support the project with a few modifications. He requested the balcony be eliminated, height be reduced, front yard setback increased and façade material changed in order for him to be able to make the required findings to approve the project.

Commissioner Curtis stated he had reviewed the plans and concurred that the design was improved. He stated he preferred stucco. He indicated support for reduction in height and increased front yard setback. He stated, although he was indifferent to the balcony, other commissioners were concerned and therefore the applicant should take that into consideration.

Chair Gelhaar agreed that a two story house might be too much for the lot. He stated he did not want to design the project. He stated the deck should be removed. He requested the plate heights be reduced and front set back three feet. He indicated support for the use of stucco.

In response to Commissioner Davitt, Planner Gjolme stated the tower could be highlighted in stone and the remainder in wood siding or stucco.

MOTION Commissioner Davitt moved and Commissioner Curtis seconded a motion to approve the project conditioned to modify the tower materials as stated by staff, eliminate the balcony, reduce the floor plate height to reduce the overall height by 18 inches, and move the house back three feet. The motion carried 3-1-1, Commissioner Hill dissenting and Commissioner Cahill absent.

- B. Second-floor Review 08-05; 2051 Los Amigos Street; Kang: Request to allow construction of a compliant 5,267 sq. ft. two-story residence on a 26,491 sq. ft. lot.

Planner Clarke discussed the proposed project. He explained the surrounding parcels. He presented photographs of the neighboring properties, landscaping and story poles. He discussed the proposed elevations, setbacks and footprint. He stated the revised plans did not significantly change the footprint. He stated the rear setback was reduced from 23 to 17 ½ feet due to changes to the plans as requested by the Planning Commission. He stated the house was increased by 231 square feet. He discussed the design modifications based on Commission and public comments. He presented the revised elevations including window alterations and changes to the balcony. He stated the front elevation had not changed. He discussed changes to the floor plans. He stated the overall height was 31 feet. He discussed possible reductions to plate height to lower the overall height. He stated the applicant would be required to file a covenant regarding protecting all the trees on the north side of the property. He discussed neighbor involvement. He stated the changes had improved the project but there was still room for improvement.

In response to Commissioner Curtis, Planner Clarke explained that the guest house could be moved 5 feet and it would not result in overcrowding. He stated the applicant had decided not to move the house. He stated the bays could be conditioned to utilized frosted glass.

In response to Chair Gelhaar, Planner Clarke stated the staircase was inside the house. He stated there were two staircases. Chair Gelhaar asked if two staircases raised concern regarding the potential of having someone else live in that portion of the house. Planner Clarke stated he was not concerned.

Mr. Chang Kang, applicant, thanked the Commission and expressed his appreciation for the community. He discussed modifications made to the project in order to alleviate the concerns of the neighbors. He stated the plans were within City Code.

In response to Chair Gelhaar, Mr. Kang, applicant, stated the additional staircase was helpful to access the second floor. He stated the architect could explain the purpose but was not present at the meeting.

Chair Gelhaar admonished the speakers to focus on the changes made to the project.

Ellen Depris, 2053 Los Amigos Street, stated the changes did not assuage the concerns raised before. She expressed concern regarding views and placement of the home. She requested the house be moved south on the property. She expressed concern regarding the setback of the second story. She discussed the covenant protecting the trees on the north side of the property. She discussed the frosting of the windows. She requested something be done about the front balcony due to it looking into their master bedroom.

Richard Guglielmino, 2055 Los Amigos Street, expressed concern regarding the scale of the proposed project and stated it was in violation of the residential design guidelines. He requested shrubbery and trees be included in the covenant including limitations on how much could be cut. He stated approval of the project would be setting a precedent. He suggested the structure be moved 10 feet, trees and shrubs protected and the north end of the balcony be blocked.

Mark Rutkowski, 2049 Los Amigos Street, expressed appreciation for the attempted changes. He expressed concern regarding the trees and requested a certified arborist review the plans and ensure the trees were protected.

Female speaker (did not identify herself) requested the Commission preserve their neighborhood.

Commissioner Davitt stated he visited the property again and reviewed the revised plans. He stated the applicant had made efforts to alleviate concerns. He stated an arborist report would be conducted. He stated he could make the findings for the house. He requested the balconies and decks be completely eliminated. He requested the floor plates be lowered to reduce the height by 18 inches. He stated it appeared that the house could be moved south. He requested it be moved down a minimum of five feet. He suggested a complete landscape plan be approved by the director. He stated the house was Code compliant.

Chair Gelhaar agreed with Commissioner Davitt that the balconies should be removed due to privacy issues. He stated he would be more sympathetic to moving the house if the adjacent house was at the same elevation but it was higher therefore it did not make sense to move the house. He stated the frosted windows were helpful. He indicated support for the condition protecting the trees. He agreed that the floor plates could be reduced.

Commissioner Curtis stated he visited the site twice and examined the plans. He stated the side was overly bulky. He indicated support to eliminate all of the balconies. He suggested moving the tower east so that there was articulation on the corner of the structure. He stated the house could remain in its current location if the floor plates were reduced. He proposed modifying Condition No. 17 to add the following: "an approved landscape plan with the perpetual protection and preservation of existing trees on the northern property line (or approved alternative trees)."

Commissioner Hill stated moving the house southerly would alleviate some of the problems. He expressed concern with the balcony. He stated he could not make Findings 2, 3, and 4. He stated he did not want to redesign the house.

In response to Commissioner Davitt, Director Stanley stated the home could be moved five feet to the south and the balcony removed to address privacy issues. Planner Clarke displayed the protected trees. Director Stanley stated reducing height and retaining the existing trees would reduce impact to the neighbors. Planner Clarke stated the house could be moved by five feet if the courtyard was reduced. He stated trees would be lost if the home was moved.

MOTION Commissioner Curtis moved and Chair Gelhaar seconded a motion to approve the project with the balconies removed, setback returned to that as originally presented, plate height lowered, site obscured glass used on all windows on the north side, and Condition 17 amended as suggested by Commissioner Curtis. The motion carried 3-1-1, Vice Chair Hill dissenting and Commissioner Cahill absent.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- A. Minor Conditional Use Permit 431; 1111A Foothill Blvd.; Alfonso Milanese / Clay & Paula Frazier:
Request to allow a new real estate office use in an existing tenant space.

Presentation not made by staff since this was a returning item.

Commissioner Curtis suggested adding a condition that the permit be brought back to the Commission for review if the intensity of use increase being that the parking was limited.

Commissioner Curtis stated the permit should come back to the Commission if the employee count increased.

Vice Chair Hill stated it seemed like a good idea but might be difficult to enforce.

Commissioner Davitt suggested reviewing the permit in 12 months if there is a problem.

Commissioner Curtis agreed with a twelve month review.

Director Stanley suggested a condition to conduct a review in one year unless there were issues regarding parking or the new parking management plan.

Planner Clarke indicated a real estate office would be a less intense use than Curves. He suggested providing discretion to the Director to review complaints and return to Commission if necessary.

Chair Gelhaar indicated support for approving the permit subject to review by the Director.

MOTION Commissioner Hill moved and Commissioner Davitt seconded a motion to approve the conditional use permit with an additional condition that the permit be reconsidered and reviewed by the Director in one year. The motion carried 4-0, Commissioner Cahill absent.

- B. Hillside Development Permit 05-65 (amendment); Setback Modification 06-19 (amendment); 4141 Cambridge Road; Zarate:
Request to amend a previously approved project to allow an over-height wall within the required front yard setback as part of a new driveway entry structure.

Planner Gjolme provided an overview of the proposed project. He explained abandonment of the driveway and establishment of a new entry. He explained that it was necessary to approve a modification to the setback. He stated the wall height exceeded six feet in height. He presented photographs depicting the street grade and wall height. He stated the item was brought to staff due to a complaint from the neighborhood. He stated the wall was too tall and too stark to be approved in its current form. He stated staff had worked with the applicant to modify the wall. He displayed a graphic of the proposed amended wall. He stated the revised plan lowered the wall and included wrought iron. He stated the revisions would reduce the wall to the appropriate height. He stated the revised proposal complied with the decorative fence approval. He stated landscaping would further soften the overall appearance of the wall and the curved portions could be flattened out to reduce the massing effect. He explained that the proposal was only for the entry and would not impact the majority of the front portion of the property. He stated the structure would not directly impose upon the adjacent neighbors due to setbacks. He explained that one portion of the fence would

remain non-compliant. He stated the topography of the site and course of the street lends itself to positive findings.

Commissioner Curtis asked if the space would remain open near the driveway. Planner Gjolme explained the driveway gates.

Chair Gelhaar opened the public hearing.

Roberto Zarate, applicant, thanked staff for their time and assistance. He discussed difficulty in balancing the regulations with aesthetics due to slope and grade of the street.

Chair Gelhaar asked if there was enough land in front of the wall to install landscaping. In response to Chair Gelhaar, Mr. Zarate indicated acceptance of a condition requiring landscaping.

Planner Gjolme stated the landscaping would be approved by Public Works and the Planning Director.

Susan Partamain, 4150 Cambridge Road, stated the structure was overwhelming and too large for the site. She asked if the red portion would jut out or if it was on the same line. Planner Gjolme stated the location would not change but the height would be lowered. Mrs. Partamain expressed concern with people exiting the Zarate driveway. She discussed potential traffic and visual impacts created by the wall. She stated it appeared as if there was a double wall. Planner Gjolme explained the second wall that was constructed for the fountain. Mrs. Partamain expressed concern about people hiding behind the wall. She stated the revised plan was an improvement but requested the wall be moved back from the sidewalk. Planner Gjolme stated the Planning Commission would have to decide if additional setback was necessary.

Chair Gelhaar closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Hill stated the finished product would be an asset to the neighborhood. He stated he was prepared to approve the wall with the addition of a condition requiring landscape.

Planner Gjolme stated Public Works would have to review the distance from the gates to property line.

Commissioner Davitt agreed that the finished wall would look different. He stated he could support the wall with the addition of landscaping.

Commissioner Curtis stated the finished wall would be an asset. He indicated support for the design proposed by the applicant subject to approval by the Planning Director and Public Works Director.

In response to Chair Gelhaar, Director Stanley stated the Commission could approve the project with the landscaping left to the discretion of the Planning Director and Public Works Director.

In response to Commissioner Curtis, Mr. Zarate stated there were lights proposed on the two pilasters. Planner Gjolme stated there might be height issues with lights on the pilasters.

MOTION Davitt moved and Hill seconded a motion to approve Hillside Development Permit 05-65 (amendment); Setback Modification 06-19 (amendment); 4141 Cambridge Road; Zarate, adding a condition that the landscaping plan be approved by the Public Works Department and the Director of Community Development. The motion carried 4-0, Commissioner Cahill absent.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no additional business.

X. COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

There were no Commissioner comments.

XI. COMMENTS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Director Stanley wished the Commission a nice vacation and thanked it for attending this special meeting.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION Commissioner Curtis moved and Davitt seconded a motion to adjourn at 7:53 p.m. The motion carried 4-0, Commissioner Cahill absent.

Secretary to the Planning Commission