

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE  
HELD ON AUGUST 8, 2017**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Gunter called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**II. ROLL**

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

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Flag Salute was recited.

**IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

There were none.

**V. REORDERING OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was not reordered.

**VI. CONSENT CALENDAR**

There were no items.

**VII. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**A. Hillside Development Permit 17-19; PDS Studio Inc./Monte Valido LLC; 4621 Indiana Avenue**

Planner Gjolme gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report. A PowerPoint presentation was shown. The presentation indicated the revisions made from the previous hearing. The length of the project, overall height, grading, and additional adjustments were discussed.

The overall height dropped 3 feet and the bulk and mass were reduced. The front elevation at the roofline was reduced by 3 feet and the new height is 27.5 feet tall inclusive of the fill pad, which is within code standards. The architectural style remains consistent.

Staff recommended approval of the project.

Chairman Gunter confirmed that there are no changes to the conditions of approval.

The Public Hearing was opened and closed as no one in attendance asked to comment.

Vice Chairman Hazen said that he could make all the findings.

Commissioner Jain said that he could make all the findings.

Commissioner Oh said that he could make all of the findings.

Chairman Gunter said that he could make all of the findings.

Assistant City Attorney Guerra said that the minor revision to the conditions of approval needs to be incorporated.

M/S/C – Jain/Hazen to approve the project with a minor revision to condition numbers 17 and 18. Approved 4-0.

## **VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **A. Hillside Development Permit 16-35 / Second Floor Review 16-22 / Setback Modification 17-03; Chou / Ong; 3987 Chevy Chase Drive**

Assistant Planner Yesayan gave an overview of the project.

Commissioner Hazen asked why the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor did not step to the front.

Mr. Yesayan said that it was compliant at the front and did not need to.

Vice Chairman Hazen asked if the roof was flat.

Mr. Yesayan said that the parapet shielded it and that it integrates with the carport roof.

Commissioner Jain asked to refer back to the site plan. He questioned how the lot orientations were determined. He questioned how the lot orientation was determined.

Mr. Yesayan said that the house fronts and takes access from Windsor Place. In addition, it would not be favorable for the pool to end up in what could be perceived as the front yard if the Chevy Chase frontage was to be used as the front yard. It would be more logical for the orientation to be Windsor Place.

Commissioner Oh asked if there was any architectural or structural reason for the flat roof.

Mr. Yesayan said that the architect can answer that question.

Chairman Gunter asked if there were other offsite parking spaces.

Planner Gjolme said that would not be required since the proposal is not a new development.

Applicant Mary Chou showed a photo to the Commission. She said that the shed roof works better than a pitched roof given the height and slope that would be achieved. It is simpler and cleaner.

Commissioner Oh asked why a bathtub was designed for the loft and playroom for the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

Commissioner McConnell said that it would be a nice amenity for the loft/playroom.

Commissioner Oh said that the bathroom does not appear to be needed.

Chairman Gunter wanted it to be clear that it could not be converted to a bedroom which would require upgrading the parking.

Commissioner McConnell said that it would not be feasible to build a new garage as there are too many constraints on the site.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Commissioner Oh said that he visited the site. The lot is a unique configuration and well-screened. He was concerned about the use of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor given the tub. He said that he takes the applicant's word that it would be used as rec room and loft. He said he could make the findings. Commissioner Jain said that the lot is unique. He said that he is not concerned with the bathroom but the scale and the height of the 2<sup>nd</sup>-floor addition. He said he was unsure how it would look based on story poles. He said he would prefer more articulation at the 2<sup>nd</sup>-floor level. He said he is all right with the Setback Modification, but not the SFR and HDP requests given the imposing nature of the addition.

Vice Chairman Hazen said that he concurred with his colleagues regarding the SFR and HDP applications. He believed that there needed to be improved articulation and/or increased setback between floor levels. He said he preferred to see it redesigned.

Chairman Gunter said that he agreed with his colleagues and that he was all right with the setback modification request, but not the HDP and SFR requests. He was concerned about use of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and retention of the carport.

The public hearing was reopened to determine a date certain to continue the item to.

Ms. Chou said that she understood that she needs to have revised plans submitted to staff no later than September 6, 2017.

M/S/C – Gunter/Hazen to continue the item to September 26, 2017 with the requirement that the applicant resubmit revised plans by 9/9/17. Approved 4-0.

**B. Second-floor Review 17-01; Stoddard / Stratton; 1118 Olive Lane**

Planner Gjolme gave a presentation in accordance with the staff report and recommended positive findings and approval.

Commissioner Oh asked if the neighbor on the south side of the proposed project supported the project.

Mr. Gjolme said that an attempt to contact the neighbor was made but a reply was not received.

Vice Chairman Hazen asked if the landscaping was to remain or be removed at the corner.

Mr. Gjolme said that removing the corner landscaping is not part of the proposal as far as he is aware.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Speaker and applicant, Craig Stoddard, said that the property owner approached all neighbors nearby for their support including the south neighbor who seemed to be at home at the time, but did not reply.

Vice Chairman Hazen asked if the corner area would be cleaned where the Deodar tree is as there is a lot of debris there.

Commissioner Oh said that there should be conditions requiring landscaping along the south property line.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Vice Chairman Hazen said that the lot was great and the proposed project will work well on the site. He hoped that the Deodar could be saved.

Commissioner Jain said that Mr. Gjolme articulated and presented the project nicely. He said that he could support the project.

Chairman Gunter said that he drives by the site daily and that the siting and location is nicely done.

M/S/C – Gunter/Oh to approve the project as submitted. Approved 4-0.

**C. Second-Floor Review 17-02/Setback Modification 17-01; Bednar/Chu; 1027 Flanders Road**

Assistant Planner Harris gave a presentation in accordance with the Staff Report. She recommended approval of the Second-Floor Review and the Setback Modification for the existing encroachment, but not the new encroachments requested.

Chairman Gunter asked if we received a survey.

Ms. Harris replied that we did receive a survey but it was not included in the packets for the Commissioners.

Chairman Gunter asked for clarification that the roadway is a private street and that the current pavement is only to the centerline of the street and, therefore, the front setback must be taken from the edge of the easement located on the subject property.

Ms. Harris confirmed this information and indicated that this undeveloped easement only affects the two lots that are on the north side of Flanders Road in this block and the lot that faces Hill Street.

Chairman Gunter clarified that the average front setback is 29 feet.

Ms. Harris replied that once you remove the 25-foot-wide easement from the lots, the net front setback requirement is 29 feet.

Commissioner Hazen asked when the project is done, visually there would be 44 foot-6 inches in front of the proposed house, equal to the 25-foot easement plus the 19-foot 6-inch front setback.

Ms. Harris replied, "yes, because it is part of a recorded easement."

Commissioner Oh asked who the easement is in favor of.

Director Stanley replied it is a private street and likely in favor of the adjoining lots.

Commissioner Oh asked about the procedure for making this portion of Flanders Road a public street.

Director Stanley said the residents would have to request it but that it would not likely be made a public street since it only serves a few lots and doesn't connect through to Angeles Crest Highway.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Kurt Bednar, the project designer, stated that he is working with a unique lot and with the location of the existing pool and neighboring privacy in mind, as well as, the existing trees and fencing, the orientation of the rooms to minimize impacts on the neighbors was a consideration. The rear yard has the most screening with a tall fence and existing landscaping. The front-yard setback is also a unique situation since the immediate neighbor to the west is what is establishing the setback requirement. The garage of the house that faces Hill Street is built into the easement. There is also a power pole in the middle of the easement in front of the subject property which would be costly to relocate. He reiterated that it is unlikely that the north half of the easement would be developed.

He stated that he incorporated modern amenities while keeping everything simple. The intent is to have a Tesla roof (individual solar shingle-like panels). His client, who was not available to attend the meeting, was born in La Canada Flintridge and wanted to return to raise her child here. The neighbor's privacy was a major aspect of the design.

Commissioner Jain asked if he explored other locations for the master bedroom closet rather than requesting an encroachment.

Mr. Bednar stated that other options were explored but his client really wanted to have the closet there and that it works well with the overall architectural configuration.

Commissioner Jain asked the applicant if he gave any thought that staff may require the encroachment to be eliminated.

Mr. Bednar replied, "yes but that this configuration was what the client wanted and the closet didn't have any windows." He was also trying to provide articulation on that side. He was trying to fit the second floor under the roof line and satisfy the angle plane.

Commissioner Oh asked if there is currently a garage or carport on site.

Kurt Bednar replied no. There was a permit to convert the previous garage into a bedroom.

Commissioner Oh asked where the property owner and guests park. He also asked why such a steep roof was proposed. All other homes in the neighborhood are single-story and have lower pitched roofs. Having a steep roof is going to add to the massing of the structure.

Mr. Bednar replied that all parking for the lot is uncovered, located on the shared driveway and in front of the house. He also indicated that he tried to minimize the exposure of the second-floor wall by trying to keep the second floor under the hipped roof. He wanted the appearance of a "dormered" second floor.

Chairman Gunter agreed with Commissioner Oh and did not think it works because the roof is taller than the wall height. The steep roof is not in the character with the rest of the neighborhood. The project is already asking for exceptions. He asked Mr. Bednar to consider revising the 10:12 roof pitch.

Mr. Bednar explained that if the pitch is lowered, the second-floor wall would have more exposure.

Chairman Gunter agreed that it would have more exposure and the home will have a more traditional look. He addressed the requested setbacks. He felt that the second-floor encroachment on the east was self-imposed and could be redesigned to satisfy the code requirement. He was very concerned about the front setback. Flanders Road is clearly substandard. There isn't an encroachment now and the distance to the pool is quite large. He also questioned the compelling reason for the requested encroachments.

Mr. Bednar felt that by moving the house back to the required 29' setback, the character and articulation of the design will be lost. It would shift the whole west side back and closer to the pool. He wanted to maintain the current design. He felt that the additional under-utilized easement was a unique and compelling reason.

Commissioner Hazen asked if it was possible to keep the articulation along the front but shift it back 10 feet.

Mr. Bednar felt that if he did that, the double garage look would be lost and he garage would only have one gable facing the front.

Shirley Myers of 1033 Flanders Road, expressed concern about the new second floor in relation to sunlight impacts and views from her dining room which faces east and the subject property. Mr. Bednar assured her that the light would not be blocked but based on the story poles she was unsure if this would be the case. Otherwise, she is fine with the project. She added that she is also concerned with privacy in her back yard.

Chairman Gunter felt, unrelated to this project, that forcing applicants to do a historic report for these types of projects was a bad idea and an unnecessary expense. A thirty-second drive by would have indicated that there is no historic significance.

Regarding this project, he agreed with staff that there is no compelling reason for the Setback Modification request and that he could not make the findings for the Modification request for the front and second floor on the east side. The overly tall second floor and the large uninterrupted roof plane area is visually awkward. The light issues are addressed through setbacks and building bulk requirements. He felt that if the applicant was allowed to retain the 2-foot 9-inch first-floor setback on the east side, the overall height and roof should be lowered. He stated that he had no problem with a second floor but needs to see significant changes to the height before he can approve the request. He felt that the large uninterrupted roof plane is more of a detriment to the neighborhood than a traditional second-floor wall. He felt that privacy is not an issue. He would prefer functional windows on the side façades.

Commissioner Oh stated he could make the findings for the first-floor encroachment on the east side but not for front-yard and second-floor closet encroachments. He is concerned with the 10:12 roof pitch given that the neighborhood is all one-story and the slope should be reduced with some articulation. He also couldn't approve the Second-Floor Review as currently designed.

Commissioner Jain felt that it was a very difficult area to work in due to the grade difference within the roadway easement and future driveway access. The roof pitch is extremely high while most homes are low and the situation is accentuated because of the higher-grade of the subject lot. As designed, the house looks out of place and tall. The high pitch of the roof creates a problem for the entire area. There is plenty of room on the lot and the second-floor encroachment is not justified. He was OK with the Second-Floor Review and maintaining the 2-foot 9- inch first floor existing setback. He encouraged the applicant to explore other options for the roof line and the new encroachments.

Commissioner Hazen indicated that he could make the findings for the 2'-9" first-floor setback and suggested that the roof pitch be lowered to 8:12. He believed it was too tall for that street. The front-yard encroachment should be moved back to comply with the required setback.

Chairman Gunter asked the applicant for a date certain as it was clear that the Commission was requesting a redesign.

Mr. Bednar stated that he would take two-weeks to complete the revisions to the drawings. He asked for clarification of the maximum allowed floor area for the lot.

Ms. Harris clarified that the maximum allowable floor area reported in the staff report was correct.

Chairman Gunter suggested the 9/26/18 Planning Commission Hearing.

M/C/S Gunter/Oh to continue the project to 9/26/17 for redesign to eliminate the front and second-floor east side-yard setback, and reduce the height of the second floor. Approved 4-0.

**D. Zone Change 17-04, an Amendment of Chapter 11.11 of Title 11 of the City of La Cañada Flintridge Municipal Code; City of La Cañada Flintridge**

Director Stanley gave a staff report and a presentation to the Commission regarding the standards for semicircular driveways. He said that he was looking for a favorable recommendation to the City Council.

Chairman Gunter asked if under the recommendation, would there be any conflict or superseding of the 50% landscape requirement?

Director Stanley said, "no."

Commissioner Jain asked if the lot is 65 feet or less and if you could repair the driveway and if so, what percentage?

Director Stanley said that in instances where the driveway is nonconforming, repairs can be made, but not replaced.

Chairman Gunter said that the report was very comprehensive and thoughtful. It is clear how the item would be applied and therefore he can make the findings.

Vice Chairman Hazen agreed.

The Public Hearing was opened.

The Public Hearing was closed due to a lack of persons to comment.

M/S/C – Gunter/Oh to recommend to the City Council that they consider adopting the amendment. Approved 4-0.

#### **IX. REPORT OF DIRECTOR'S REVIEWS**

Was reported.

**A. Director's Misc. Review 17-24 (Pool Equipment); Yun; 809 Milmada Drive:** allowed the placement of new pool/spa mechanical equipment to encroach 10'-0" into the required 15'-0" rear yard setback.

**B. Director's Misc. Review 17-25 (Pool Equipment); Mak; 4827 La Cañada Boulevard:** allowed the placement of pool/spa mechanical equipment to encroach 1'-0" into the required side yard setback and 10'-0" into the rear yard setback.

**C. Director's Misc. Review 17-20(SB) (313 square-foot addition); Woods; 1943 Lyans Drive:** allowed the construction of a 313 square-foot single story addition to an existing two-story residence.

#### **X. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.

#### **XI. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS**

There were none.

#### **XII. COMMENTS FROM THE DIRECTOR**

Director Stanley said there were no meetings that took place in August, with the exception of the August 8, 2017 meeting.

FSHA will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

M/S/C – Gunter/Jain to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 p.m. Approved 4-0.



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Secretary to the Planning Commission