

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA

Thursday, November 19, 2020 at 6:30 P.M.

VIRTUAL MEETING

ROLL CALL

The meeting convened at: 6:31 pm

Commissioners Present: Mark Gallatin (Chair), Rebecca Thompson (Vice-Chair), William Cross, Steven Friedman and Kristin Morrish

Staff Present: Joanna Hankamer (Planning and Community Development Director), Kanika Kith (Planning Manager), Malinda Lim (Associate Planner), Candida Neal (Contract Preservation Planner)

City Council Liaison: Dr. Richard Schneider

Please Note: These Minutes are a summary of the meetings and are not a fully transcribed record.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approved 4-0. Vice-Chair Thompson joined the meeting after the vote, due to technical difficulties.

DISCLOSURE OF SITE VISITS AND EX-PARTE CONTACTS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

None.

PRESENTATIONS

None.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. **1960 Oak Street/Project No. 2320-COA (Continued) – Certificate of Appropriateness for an approximately 581 square-foot, two-story addition to an existing 2-story single-family residence and the expansion of the existing garage:**

Recommendation:

Approve, subject to Conditions of Approval.

Commissioner Friedman recused himself due to the proximity of his residence.

Staff Presentation:

Planning Manager Kith played a prerecorded PowerPoint presentation by Candida Neal, Contract Planner, of this project.

Questions for Staff:

Chair Gallatin inquired about the two new proposed casement windows and the intention to use white obscure glass in them. He also asked about the source of a reference in the staff report stating the English Arts and Crafts Revival style includes cantilevered second story elements as a defining characteristic used in the proposed design. Planner Candida Neal said she used *McCallister's Book of Historical American Homes*.

Planner Neal provided the Commissioners an update between the presentation given today and the revised presentation uploaded to the website.

Public Hearing:

No comments were received.

Applicant's Presentation:

None. However, the Applicant is online and available to answer questions.

The Architect, Georgie Cager, who is working with homeowners Brian and Stephanie Sanger on this project, joined the meeting. The project was submitted at the end of April and additional items were submitted to be inserted in the current packet that included four exterior renderings that are loose 3D sketch up models to show the bulk and the mass of the building from street level. The clients are a family of four with two small children living in a three-bedroom two-bath house. Their request was to enlarge the second floor to be able to have their two boys sleep on the same floor in separate bedrooms and to add a new bathroom for the owners' use. Mr. Cager highlighted the clipped ceilings, one of the character-defining features of the house on the second floor. He informed the Commission that the homeowners presented the project to their neighbors. There was only one request that came back from the neighbor directly to the east – to relocate the AC condensers due to any noise issue or acoustic challenges that might come from the condensers.

Questions for Applicant:

Vice-Chair Thompson and Architect Cager discussed the plans to differentiate new from old.

Chair Gallatin and Architect Cager discussed the location and screening requirements for the AC condensers along with the dining room doors and the Juliette balcony.

Commissioner Discussion:

Vice-Chair Thompson remarked that the Juliette balcony itself is to keep babies from crawling out, among other things, and gives the home a finished look, too.

Commissioner Morrish loved that the homeowners shared the project with the neighbors. It is so important because historic homes do not exist in a vacuum, but are part of a larger community.

Commissioner Cross liked what was presented and thought it comes down to the finishes and their execution to make it look like it's been there since 1930. He will be in support of it.

Chair Gallatin inquired about the two proposed skylights and the issues of differentiation and massing. He thought the key difference between the original and the proposed addition has to do with the orientation of the second story mass. He thought the architect did an excellent job with a challenging project and has come up with a solution that respects the character of the house as well as the neighborhood.

Decision:

Commissioner Morrish motioned, seconded by Vice-Chair Thompson, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for this project at 1960 Oak Street. She made the requisite mandatory findings with at least three project specific findings - numbers three, five and six. She made the finding for the exemption on the second story, a condition to review the visibility of the solar tubes or the skylights, a condition about the south elevation dining room doors and the treatment of the exterior finish on the east elevation, a condition regarding use of white obscure glass in the proposed casement windows, and a condition regarding the requisite screening of the AC condenser units as required by Code upon their proposed relocation. All items could be subject to a Chair review.

Motion carried, 4-0. The project is approved, subject to the Conditions of Approval outlined in the staff report and as amended today.

Commissioner Friedman rejoined the meeting.

2. 925 Palm Avenue/Project No. 2339-COA – Certificate of Appropriateness for an 866 square-foot single-story addition and alterations to an existing single-family home:

Recommendation:

Approve the project with the formation of a subcommittee to work with the applicant to refine the proposed addition, subject to Conditions of Approval.

Planning Manager Kith recused herself and left the meeting due to a conflict with the proximity of the project to her residence. Associate Planner Lim represented the staff for this item.

Staff Presentation:

Associate Planner Lim introduced Alexandra Madsen, Contract Preservation Planner from Rincon, who played a prerecorded PowerPoint presentation of this project.

Questions for Staff:

Chair Gallatin asked who comprised the subcommittee when the Mills Act Application was considered last year. Associate Planner Lim said the members of the subcommittee were Commissioner Friedman and Commissioner Cross.

Chair Gallatin referred to the overview of the house that dates back to 1903 and 1934, and requested clarification of where the original house ended and the 1934 addition was located relative to that. Contract Planner Madsen highlighted the location.

Chair Gallatin asked for clarification of the foundation material to be used. Contract Planner Madsen said the rear foundation will be in concrete, as indicated on the plans, and not in river rock, as indicated in the staff report.

Public Comments:

Staff received four written comments and four verbal comments. They were provided to the Commission earlier today and posted on the website. Contract Planner Madsen played the verbal comments that were received.

Applicant's Presentation:

Contract Planner Madsen played a prerecorded PowerPoint presentation by homeowners Derek and Christina Vaughn.

Architect Mitchell Sawasy joined the meeting. The challenge on this project was really keeping it subordinate to the original house. They have chosen a one-story scheme to maintain a low-level profile and have offset it from the original house on both sides to show differentiation. The roofline has been lowered and the ridgeline of the existing house maintained without impacting it. He confirmed the foundation along the rear would be exposed concrete and not glued on river rock as was indicated in the staff report. As indicated in the client's presentation, they have been working with three different people at Rincon over time and received some different direction and thoughts from them.

Questions for Applicant:

Architect Sawasy commented that some of the initial feedback was that the project needed to have more differentiation between the existing and the proposed and so the shape has been extruded out. The curved Bay window is nothing more than an element of form thought to be attractive chosen to help break up the mass of the addition.

Chair Gallatin asked staff if there is a requirement of the Mills Act program that the property owner has to live on site. Planner Lim answered that the owner does not have to live at the property for the Mills Act Contract. It is not in the contract nor in the Ordinance.

Commissioner Discussion:

Vice-Chair Thompson discussed the relocation of the trellis. The architect said the trellis is currently located between the existing garage and the existing house and will be impacted with the new addition. It faces west and will provide some additional sun relief to the west elevation where it will again be accessible for use for entertaining from walking out of the bedroom as well as the side of the house.

Commissioner Friedman was inclined to consider the appointment of the subcommittee to help the applicant, but wanted to continue the item rather than to try to move to approve a project based on such a large contingency.

Commissioner Morrish would rather continue this item because of the design changes that need to happen.

Commissioner Cross added that the proposed project does not change the streetscape whatsoever. He does not have a problem with the project.

Chair Gallatin agreed with the issues as identified by the contract planning staff and thinks the bigger issue is process related. Given the fact that this applicant has been working on this for the length of time that they have and a lack of continuity with the consulting staff that they have been interacting with, he concurs with Commissioner Morrish's excellent suggestion to continue this item to the next meeting and allow the applicant and his architect to work with staff on the outstanding issues.

Chair Gallatin remarked that the Commission received public comments both in writing and verbally on this item. Two of the written and one of the verbal comments (which was from one of the written commenters) brought up some issues of concern if, in fact, they are true. There were allegations about several potential Code violations. Chair Gallatin asked staff if there is any Code enforcement history on this property that would verify or confirm any of those alleged violations. Planning and Community Development Director Hankamer stated that this address does not have any active or past Code violations on file.

Planning and Community Development Director Hankamer mentioned that if this item were continued, it would be to the January meeting. The December Commission meeting will have a very short agenda. In addition, this project is not subject to the Landscape Ordinance so that condition will be removed.

Decision:

Vice-Chair Thompson motioned, seconded by Commissioner Morrish, to continue this item to the January regular meeting to review possible changes to the design addressing the questions that were raised by staff and Commissioners.

Motion carried, 5-0. The project is continued to the January Cultural Heritage Commission meeting.

Planning Manager Kith returned to the meeting.

3. 260 Saint Albans/Project No. 2345-COA/DEL – Delisting a single-family residence from the South Pasadena Inventory of Cultural Resources:

Recommendation:

Recommend approval to the City Council for the “delisting” (removal) of 260 Saint Albans from the South Pasadena Inventory of Cultural Resources.

Staff Presentation:

Planning Manager Kith played a prerecorded PowerPoint presentation by Contract Planner Candida Neal.

Questions for Staff:

Chair Gallatin commented that this is the second delisting request that they have received in the last two or three months. It would be helpful to get a brief explanation of why the delisting is being requested. Further, he inquired as to when these delistings are approved, how is the inventory being updated and made available to the public. Contract Planner Neal responded that her understanding was that the applicant is thinking about making some changes to the house, but referred the Commission to the homeowners to answer this question.

Planning Manager Kith said the application is just for the delisting and does not request nor require that information. Updating the inventory is done through Council resolution as the delistings are approved. The updated inventory list then gets posted online for access by the public.

Public Hearing:

No public comments were received for this item.

Applicant's Presentation:

Planning Manager Kith introduced the Applicant's Representative, Tony George, to the meeting.

Mr. George remarked that a project narrative was submitted as part of their packet. The applicant is seeking to delist the property from the cultural inventory as the property clearly does not constitute designation as an historical resource and should not be considered as such. An exhaustive report generated by Sapphos Environmental substantiates this claim. The owners are considering all options for the property, including selling it as is, renovation and/or partial or full demolition, any or all of which would not have an adverse change to any historical resource.

Questions for Applicant:

None.

Commissioner Discussion:

The Commissioners concurred that the property is not part of a district nor a contributor to a district nor independently worthy of any listing. Commissioner Friedman noted that the way the Ordinance is structured, these orphaned properties that are not necessarily jewels, but are part of the City's historic fabric, are vulnerable.

Decision:

Commissioner Morrish motioned, seconded by Vice-Chair Thompson, that the Commission recommend to the City Council that the property be delisted from the inventory.

Motion carried, 5-0. The recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council for action.

CONSENT ITEMS

4. None.

PRESENTATIONS

5. None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

6. None.

ADMINISTRATION

7. Comments from City Council Liaison:

Dr. Richard Schneider said he will be leaving office in the next couple of weeks and he will no longer be the Council Liaison. He wanted to thank everyone on this Commission for their perceptive, thorough and incisive work. He encouraged them to continue to do good work when he's gone and good luck.

8. Comments from Cultural Heritage Commissioners:

The Commissioners discussed the possibility and logistics of implementation of changing the time of the Commission hearings to earlier in the day in consideration of the overworked staff. They expressed their desire to preserve the great staff that we have and not burn them out.

Planning Manager Kith suggested letting staff look into the details. The time of the Commission meetings is outlined in the Ordinance, but because of the pandemic, the City Manager may have the authority to make some modifications. This item will be put on the next agenda for discussion.

9. Comments from Subcommittees:

None.

10. Comments from South Pasadena Preservation Foundation (SPPF) Liaison:

Chair Gallatin reported that SPPF is meeting once again. Although they had not had a Board meeting since February (since the pandemic began), for the second month in a row they have conducted a virtual Board meeting.

11. Comments from Staff:

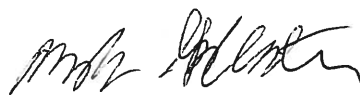
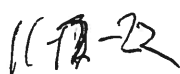
Planning Manager Kith reported the good news that Council approved a contract for staff to get temporary help from contract planners to help address the delisting properties issue.

She also reported the Planning Commission had a special meeting whereby they considered and approved the Seven Patios mixed use project on El Centro adjacent to the train station.

Chair Gallatin wished everyone a happy and safe Thanksgiving.

ADJOURNMENT

12. The meeting adjourned at 8:56 pm to the next regular Cultural Heritage Commission meeting scheduled on December 17, 2020.

APPROVED,	
	
_____ Mark Gallatin Chair, Cultural Heritage Commission	_____ Date