

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA

Monday, February 7, 2022 at 6:30 P.M.

VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM TELECONFERENCE

ROLL CALL

The meeting convened at: 6:49 pm

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

Staff Present: Angelica Frausto-Lupo (Community Development Director), Matt Chang (Planning Manager) and Alexandra Madsen (Contract Planner)

City Council Liaison: Evelyn G. Zneimer

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approved 5-0.

DISCLOSURE OF SITE VISITS AND EX-PARTE CONTACTS

Commissioner Cross, Commissioner Lopez, Commissioner Morrish and Vice-Chair Gallatin visited or drove by both sites and no Commissioner had any ex parte communications or contacts.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

None.

PRESENTATION

None.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. **1806 Wayne Avenue/Project No. 2445-COA – a Certificate of Appropriateness for a proposed 380 square-foot second story addition to an existing 2,220-square-foot two-story single-family residence located at 1806 Wayne Avenue:**

Recommendation:

Approve the Certificate of Appropriateness, subject to the Conditions of Approval.

Presentation:

Contract Planner Alexandra Madsen presented a PowerPoint presentation of the project.

Questions for Staff:

Vice-Chair Gallatin asked several questions regarding the conversion of the garage to an ADU which was shown on the submitted plans and whether this project had to comply with the new design standards for ADUs on historic properties, including questions regarding FAR calculations.

Planning Manager Chang noted the ADU project would be subject to the new requirements just adopted by the City Council this past December and the regular Ordinance passed in January. The new Historical Design Guidelines would also apply to the ADU project. Contract Planner Madsen addressed the FAR concerns.

Vice-Chair Gallatin discussed the separation between the proposed addition to the garage and the main house and the minimum separation requirement between structures and wanted to confirm that it is not something for the Commission to be concerned with at tonight's meeting. Contract Planner Madsen concurred.

Planning Manager Chang explained that the Commission can only review the COA application at this point. The ADU application will be subject to staff review. However, the Municipal Code states that if anything does not comply with the Standards' requirements, staff can bring that ADU application to the Cultural Heritage Commission for approval. At this time, it will be a separate review process.

Vice-Chair Gallatin and Contract Planner Madsen discussed the landscaping section of the report.

Vice-Chair Gallatin asked for clarification regarding a series of squares and rectangles depicted on the plans which look to be multiple electrical panels. Contract Planner Madsen deferred to the architect.

Commissioner Lopez and Chair Thompson discussed whether or not a section of the submitted plans that is not part of the project should be shown on the drawings, and, if included, should contain a notation indicating that a particular section is *not a part* to be considered by the Commission considering it might affect the overall project – light, air, aesthetics, etc.

Applicant's Presentation:

None. However, Architect Bruce Ruggles joined the meeting.

Questions for Applicant:

Architect Ruggles explained that the extra panels referred to by Vice-Chair Gallatin on the side are the inverters for the existing solar panels on the roof and a power generator. With regard to the ADU, the plans were originally submitted with that section marked as *not a part*, but were told that they had to include it for the submittal.

Chair Thompson apologized for the confusion and complimented the architect on the project and mentioned that it was very sensitive and thoughtful, and appreciated that he paid attention to the existing vernacular of the building and community and the district.

Commissioner Discussion:

Commissioner Lopez indicated, and Chair Thompson agreed, that it was quite a nice project and a great scale, compatible with the neighbors and the building that's already there. It seemed all around very good to him.

Architect Ruggles and Chair Thompson discussed the second floor, the 1996 addition and the belly band.

The Commissioners, led by Vice-Chair Gallatin, discussed whether story poles might help with the decision-making and concluded that they were not necessary in this instance.

Decision:

Commissioner Lopez motioned, seconded by Commissioner Morrish, to approve the project as submitted. The required findings can be made - the general findings, the Secretary of the Interior's findings and project specific findings 2, 3 and 5.

Motion carried, 5-0. This project is approved, subject to the Conditions of Approval.

2. **2039 Edgewood Drive/Project No. 2444-COA – Certificate of Appropriateness for a proposed 149 square-foot first story and a 713 square-foot second story addition to an existing 2,475 square-foot two-story single-family residence located at 2039 Edgewood Drive:**

Presentation:

Contract Planner Alexandra Madsen presented a PowerPoint presentation of the project.

Recommendation:

Form a subcommittee to work with the applicant to refine and relocate the proposed addition to the rear of the property. Approve the Certificate of Appropriateness upon relocation of the addition to the rear of the residence and subject to Conditions of Approval.

Questions for Staff:

Vice-Chair Gallatin asked about the proposed roof plan and clarification of an existing gable vent.

Chair Thompson remarked that the existing house is a great example of Craftsman architecture from that era and an asset to the community. She requested that the Commission see it in 3-D.

Commissioner Morrish expressed concern that the specific character-defining feature of the house - the tiny little pop-up - might not be a character-defining feature anymore if the property owners make the pop-up compatible with the neighbors.

Applicant's Presentation:

Architect James Coane introduced himself and joined the discussion. He explained the process of working on the house and the interactions and directions from the City thus far. They met with a planner throughout July and August and were advised that there didn't seem to be any issues. They met with a different planner throughout September and October who agreed and said to go ahead and submit; it should be an easy approval. They were caught off guard when meeting with Contract Planner Alexandra Madsen who introduced them to the pop-up as a character-defining feature. They debated and decided to go ahead and submit what they had, knowing they could always design in the back, if need be. They have a 3-D model to share, which can be provided later. They have already done some studies of adding on to the back which they are willing to consider. He introduced the homeowner, Amy Chu.

Homeowner Amy Chu introduced herself and her husband, who was also online. She thanked the City and explained in great detail the current state of the home and the importance and urgency of the proposed renovation.

Questions for Applicant:

Commissioner Cross inquired about the identity of the architect or the original builder.

Contract Planner Madsen replied that the building permit did not identify that information and explained that she discovered a notice in a 1913 newspaper of this house being built that specifically identifies the second story. The contractor is listed as the owner, T.I. Gifford, 2039 Edgewood Drive, two-story, eight room dwelling and garage, thirty-five hundred dollars from South Pasadena records, May 9, 1913.

Public Comments:

None.

Commissioner Discussion:

Vice-Chair Gallatin acknowledged the project architect and homeowners for taking the time to attend the meeting and provide the input - the background and the context for this project. He remarked that the design process is one of constantly overcoming challenges and finding happy mediums. He commented on the thoughtfulness of the architect's work.

Commissioner Lopez expressed his opinion that the tools of a 3-D model would help guide the Commission. He mentioned that there is nice, thoughtful elevation work that's been done on the north elevation. He is not necessarily opposed to building in front of the existing second volume.

Commissioner Morrish remarked that her only concern was that to make any of the Secretary of the Interior findings – the pop-up is very significant. To wipe it out or to mask it or to negate it, even a little bit less than it is now is going to be an issue. Although she fully appreciated the homeowners' desire to increase the number of bedrooms, one of the staff recommendations was that a subcommittee work with the architect on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards to make the second story compatible with the findings the CHC has to make.

The Commissioners discussed the necessity of forming a subcommittee and robustly examined whether it was mandatory the Commission maintain defining characteristics due to the Guidelines, recognizing it would be dangerous precedent to ignore a character-defining feature because it didn't seem fair to include it or because the property owner wanted to change it. Most of the Commissioners agreed that a character-defined feature presumably was identified as part of a survey process and the character-defining features are immutable. Commissioner Lopez expressed his disagreement.

Chair Thompson and Architect Coane discussed the Commissioners' comments, with the architect expressing his frustration and that he wished the character-defining issue had come up five months earlier, but concurred that the appointment of a subcommittee was unnecessary in his view.

Decision:

Commissioner Morrish motioned, seconded by Commissioner Lopez, to continue this project to March 17, 2022, with the architect to be given direction about the character-defining feature of the pop-up and putting the mass mostly in the back.

Vice-Chair Gallatin provided several very specific and straightforward suggestions for the architect with respect to changes to the plans which could be incorporated when the plans are resubmitted. He also noted that the use of the term ‘guidelines’ throughout this conversation referencing the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards was misidentified as ‘guidelines.’ He pointed out ‘guidelines’ are kind of take it or leave it, if you want to use it. Standards are mandatory. He advised the architect to keep in mind the distinction between the two as he vetted the design alternatives against the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards.

Motion carried, 5-0. This project is continued to the March 17th meeting.

ADMINISTRATION

3. Comments from Council Liaison:

None.

4. Comments from Commissioners:

Vice-Chair Gallatin asked for several staff updates, including the status of the review of the alterations to the Rialto Theatre and the upcoming Pasadena Showcase House of Design.

Community Development Director Frausto-Lupo explained that there is no update on the Rialto project tonight due to staff shortages, newly-hired staff and the current COVID surge, which severely impacted the workflow and productivity of the city, noting that at one point in January, there were over 40 people out due to COVID. A better update will be provided in March.

Director Frausto-Lupo deferred to Planning Manager Chang regarding the Pasadena Showcase project.

Planning Manager Chang explained that the Pasadena Showcase is a month-long event from the middle of April to the middle of May and this year will be highlighting a South Pasadena house. The staff is working with the Pasadena Showcase, the property owner and the contractors on two separate fronts. One is the operation of a temporary use permit, because staff wants to make sure that the event itself doesn’t trigger any nuisance complaints from the neighboring property owners. And second, preservation of the historical nature of the house from both interior and exterior standpoints. At this time, staff is waiting for the applicant to provide a more comprehensive set of plans to provide a better understanding of the scope of the project.

Vice-Chair Gallatin remarked that due to disturbing reports he had received from neighbors and the preservation community concerned about the restorations and manner of repairs to the Rialto Theatre and the renovations being done on behalf of the Pasadena Showcase, it would be helpful to make the community aware their concerns are being addressed and the City is on top of these projects - perhaps through a newsletter item or City Hall scoop or some other way.

And, lastly, at the previous CHC meeting, he had inquired about the Oaklawn Portals and whether they were on public property, private property or some of both. He wanted to know if an update was available.

Director Frausto-Lupo apologized that she did not have an update for this. She will follow up with Deputy Community Development Director Margaret Lin and asked if Vice-Chair Gallatin could provide more detailed information regarding his request. Vice-Chair Gallatin said he would send her an email with more information.

5. **Comments from Subcommittees:**

None.

6. **Comments from SPPF Liaison:**

Vice-Chair Gallatin reported that Mayor Cacciotti joined the group for the January meeting. The Mayor had some very interesting things to say about cultural heritage in general and his goals for the coming year to try and bring to the forefront the diverse history of Pasadena and the contributions of diverse groups – different ethnicities to South Pasadena’s history.

7. **Comments from Staff:**


Community Development Director Frausto-Lupo remarked that as this is the first official meeting after the New Year, she wished everyone a Happy New Year and wanted to thank all of the Commissioners for their patience and availability to help and assist and serve. Secondly, she addressed the staffing challenges mentioned earlier and reminded the Commission that Planning Manager Chang started in early December and three new associate planners started at the end of December. The priority has been for Matt to meet with the planners and bring them up to speed. They are moving as fast as they can to quickly fill the vacant Assistant Planner position to really help move projects forward. On another front, in the last two months or so, staff in the City Manager’s office has been analyzing the different boards and commissions of the City and scheduled a special meeting for February 23rd. The meeting will be virtual at 6:00 p.m. Commissioners are invited to participate or listen in when the staff presents their analysis to City Council. Lastly, she formally introduced Matt Chang as the new Planning Manager, welcomed him to his first meeting and invited him to address the Commission.

Planning Manager Chang thanked the Commission for welcoming him. He graduated from high school here, so it’s good to be coming home to serve this community. He thanked everyone for their availability to helping staff to get some of the projects through. The staff definitely understands there are a lot of projects that need to be processed. Staff will make sure that they are executed well and look forward to bringing more complete projects for the Commission’s consideration.

Chair Thompson welcomed all the new staff and can’t wait to meet everyone.

ADJOURNMENT

8. The meeting adjourned at 8:39 pm to the next regular Cultural Heritage Commission meeting scheduled for March 17, 2022 at 6:30 pm.

APPROVED,	
	12-15-22
_____ Mark Gallatin Chair, Cultural Heritage Commission	_____ Date