



**City of South Pasadena
Planning and Community
Development Department**

Memo

Date: September 17, 2020

To: Chair and Members of the Cultural Heritage Commission

From: Kanika Kith, Planning Manager

Re: Additional Document No. 1 for **Item No. 7** – 1534 Ramona Avenue Front Yard Landscape Design

Five (5) written public comments have been received for this project from the following people:

- Glen Duncan
- Stephanie Wolff
- Dan Berry
- Brian Bright
- Joanne Nuckols & Betsy Smith

In addition to the written public comments received, five (5) verbal comments were received via voicemail messages. One of the verbal comments is longer than 3 minutes because she speak for other neighbors. These verbal comments will be played during the meeting for the Commission and the audience to hear.

Written comments received are attached to this document and the verbal comments can be heard from link provided in the attachment list below.

Attachments:

1. Written Public Comments
2. Verbal Comments ([Click here](#))

ATTACHMENT 1
Witten Comments

GLEN DUNCAN
2031 BERKSHIRE AV
SOUTH PASADENA, CA 91030
gduncan66@gmail.com

September 16, 2020

South Pasadena Cultural Heritage Commission
1414 Mission Street
South Pasadena, CA 91030

**Re: Proposed alterations to 1534 Ramona Avenue
and the Ramona Avenue Historic District**

cc: Kanika Kith, Planning Manager

Having served on the South Pasadena Cultural Heritage Commission for almost 18 years between 1993 and 2012, I reviewed a considerable number of documents relating to the Ramona Avenue Historic District and the contributing property at 1534 Ramona Ave. During that time I do not recall a single time when a member of the Commission or the City Council cast a dissenting vote on protecting the historic character of the historic district.

This not only includes Commission actions leading to its designation as a City Landmark District in 1996, but in denying approval to proposed Ramona development projects that would have adversely effected district integrity and diminished likelihood of its inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

I trust the current commission will continue to assure this protection by assuring that the current proposed development will not negatively impact this historic property or the Ramona Avenue Historic District. Perhaps the key might be seeking input from a professional such as Ann Schied...with excellent credentials in historic preservation and landscape design who is also well versed on the history and development of the Ramona Avenue Historic District.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Glen Duncan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name "Glen Duncan".

From: [stephanie_wolff](#)
To: [PlanningComments](#)
Subject: CHC - objection to landscape development and design at 1534 Ramona
Date: Thursday, September 17, 2020 11:12:11 AM

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9/17/20

When I lived on Ramona, I actively worked to obtain a historic designation for our neighborhood. The Holy Family church was not technically apart of the neighborhood but as it is a large institution, their presence affected the character of our neighborhood. Nevertheless, the church claimed they wanted to be a good neighbor and we tried to work together to resolve issues –traffic, parking etc...

Now, the largest corner property of greatest historical significance sits occupied by one resident and the yard is largely neglected. Significant features of the hardscape have been removed. While the neighborhood would greatly appreciate maintenance of the front yard of this corner property. The owner of 1534, the Church, proposes using this property as a rectory and wishes to develop it further to service the church's purposes. This property is an anchor and gateway property for our neighborhood. The proposed landscape design is far from the pale of residential nor is it appropriate. Yes, it might be an asset to the church but hardly for the neighborhood.

I had tried to obtain a Mills act contract for my home several years ago. I poured over the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. I bought the pamphlets and hired contractors that used the 'gentlest least invasive methods' for restoration. In essence, I took the standards and guidelines very seriously. I contacted former owners and found old photos of the neighborhood. While I was denied a contract, as this committee was only beginning to formulate application procedures for the Mills act, I am happy to see my old home is being considered for the designation.

The design and concept of the landscape development of the property at 1534 appears to be stark contrast to the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the treatment of historic properties and the treatment of cultural landscapes. I urge the Cultural Heritage Committee to work with the Church to develop a plan that will respect the historical

importance of the setting relative to other residential properties in on the street.

As is, I am strongly opposed to the submitted landscape development design.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Wolff
Sent from iCloud

From: [REDACTED]
To: [PlanningComments](#)
Subject: CHC Agenda Item #7 1534 Ramona Ave
Date: Thursday, September 17, 2020 8:41:19 AM

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Chair Gallatin and Cultural Heritage Commissioners:

As the nursery manager for 13 years for a large publicly accessible botanical garden I was involved in projects of this size and scope. The Holy Family plan is on that level of scale, this to me looks like a public/commercial renovation to a residential facility in a City of South Pasadena RS zone. Managing projects like this was part of my scope of responsibility.

I feel this project is attempting to go against what has been established for a residential/historical area. The lighting, pathways and detail of this project look to me to be on a much different scope than just a residential property upgrade. The lighting will impose light pollution for the neighborhood and residence directly across from it.

I still remain questionable about the safety aspects of this proposed renovation/stroll garden, from the first aid and immediate responders aspect of any slip and fall or cut and bruise incident who is going to respond in those circumstances on property. At the institution I worked for there were constant training for these situations, I don't see anything pertaining to that circumstance meaning if an elderly person slipped on loose gravel/rock that was installed who will respond? And is it in a timely matter pertaining to the severity of the incident?

This again just looks like Holy Family the largest catholic parish in Southern California disregarding what the neighbors are saying and wanting, being the 100 pound gorilla in the room they are willing to just go forward and disregard any input or comments from the people that will be impacted the most if this is allowed to go forward.

This is a bad plan in many aspects in my opinion. Let alone the cost to the church in this economically challenging timeframe, I could think of better ways for the Catholic Church to spend their/our donated monies.

Regards

Dan Berry
1529 Ramona Ave
626-354-3664
kikco1@aol.com

From: [Brian Bright](#)
To: [PlanningComments](#)
Cc: [Kanika Kith](#)
Subject: Comments on agenda item 7, Sept 17 CHC meeting
Date: Thursday, September 17, 2020 11:11:35 AM

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Regarding agenda item #7

1534 Ramona, Project Number 2349 CoA

Dear CHC,

We strongly oppose the use of the historic 1534 Ramona Ave. residence as an "Organizational House" on a residential street, which is zoned RS.

This residence is protected as part of the "Ramona Street Historic District." This type of use will significantly change the fabric and quality of one of our oldest and most cherished South Pasadena neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

Brian Bright - Oaklawn Ave.

Jenny Bright - Oaklawn Ave.

Ray Girvigian - Oaklawn Ave.

Jamie Lesnever - Oaklawn Ave.

Mike Lesnever - Oaklawn Ave.

From: [Joanne Nuckols](#)
To: [PlanningComments](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]; [Joanne Nuckols](#)
Subject: CHC Agenda Item #7 Ramona Ave Neighborhood statement with photos
Date: Thursday, September 17, 2020 11:13:15 AM
Attachments: [1534 Neighborhood Statement.pdf](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Please see attached statement from Ramona Ave Neighbors pertaining to C of A for 1534 Ramona.

We are requesting that the Commission not approve the C of A and in addition, direct the applicant to work with the sub committee to revise the landscape design to reflect the changes recommended by architectural and landscape historian Ann Scheid included in this statement and in a more detailed report submitted under separate cover.

Thanks you for your consideration.

Betsy Smith
1532 Ramona Ave

Joanne Nuckols
1531 Ramona Ave

September 17, 2020

Dear Members of the Cultural Heritage Commission,

I am writing on behalf of the residents of the Ramona Avenue Historic District regarding item #7 on tonight's agenda. Many of us submitted individual comments when the proposed landscaping project at 1534 Ramona came before the Commission in July, and we would like to come together, again, to restate our collective opposition to the proposed changes to the historic Garrigues House.

We are a diverse group of residents in many ways, but we all chose to settle our families in South Pasadena because of the unique quality of life that the city offers. In spite of the endless expansion surrounding South Pasadena, the city has managed to preserve a quiet, small town sensibility. This is not by accident. The residents of South Pasadena recognize and have deliberately preserved the personality and historic character of our city. We are invested in the local schools, do our shopping at the farmers market, and support local businesses. We look out for our neighbors and care for our properties in a way that shows the care we have for our community.

In the same way that the residents of South Pasadena famously stood up against the extension of the 710 and fought to preserve The Rialto, our neighborhood now feels it is our responsibility to stand up and protect the integrity of the historic district where we reside.

Even in a city known for its stunning real estate, the 1500 block of Ramona Avenue stands out. Through the rest of South Pasadena, architectural styles vary from Spanish to Victorian, Colonial to Tudor, but our little cluster of Craftsman homes is unique in its cohesiveness. Beyond sharing an architectural style, the majority of the homes on the block share an architect: G.L. Stimson. The kinship of these homes is reflected in the life of our neighborhood, with neighbors enjoying progressive dinners, a block party for the Fourth of July, cookie decorating at the annual holiday party, and a lively group chat on WhatsApp to share the surplus of our fruit trees, re-home our children's forgotten toys, and solicit the proverbial cup of sugar.

Community is the reason that people choose to live in South Pasadena. We would all have hoped that, as a longstanding fixture in this community, Holy Family Church would hold that value as dearly as we do. They, instead, have shown themselves determined to grow at all costs. But what is the value in expanding the footprint of a church if that expansion is at the expense of the community it serves? What, ultimately, is the ministry of a church that refuses to love its neighbor?

Regardless of its ownership, Garrigues House is a part of this historic community of homes. To effectively remove the visual anchor of our neighborhood and incorporate it into the Holy Family campus, both in use and appearance, is a

violation of the property's zoning, the promises made by Holy Family at the time of purchase, and the aesthetic integrity of the neighborhood and the property itself.

We ask that the Commission direct the applicant to revise the landscape design to reflect the changes recommended by architectural planner Ann F. Scheid in the attached report, as quoted below:

- Restore the original walkway, its configuration and scoring, to match the concrete exactly
- Recreate the original lawn or explore the use of drought-tolerant green ground covers, of which there are many
- Remove all paths, sitting areas, patios, vegetable gardens and other alterations that are usually relegated to backyards in residential neighborhoods
- Avoid obscuring the south and west elevations of the building
- If a ramp is required for the current resident, a temporary wooden ramp can be put in place

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration regarding the appropriateness of this project and trust that you will ensure it moves forward in a way that protects the special place we all call home.

Sincerely,

Betsy and Caleb Smith
1532 Ramona Avenue

Tom and Joanne Nuckols
1531 Ramona Avenue

Jon and Karin Primuth
1537 Ramona Avenue

Chris Hoshimiya
1528 Ramona Avenue

Joanne Heyler and Craig Erickson
1545 Ramona Avenue

Michael and Jacklin Pfaff
1521 Ramona Avenue

Susie and Dan Berry
1529 Ramona Avenue

Kyle Cologne and Linda Hou
1525 Ramona Avenue

Amber and Patrick Haley
1535 Ramona Avenue

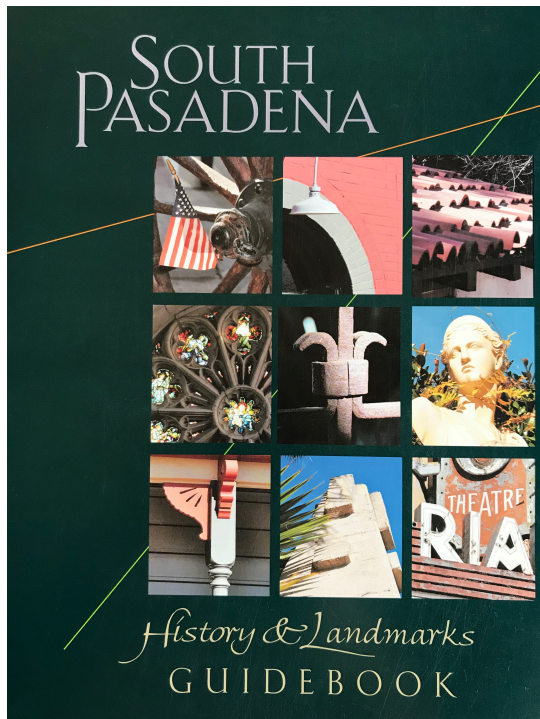
Susan Carter-SooHoo and Jon SoHoo
Previous owner: 1535 Ramona Ave

Andrew and Gabriela Berk
1511 Ramona Avenue

Elaine Carey and Vincent Schodolski
Previous owners: 1532 Ramona Ave

Ben and Becky Chuen
1509 Ramona Avenue

Stephanie Wolff
Previous owner: 1545 Ramona Ave



0 LANDMARK LOCATIONS

HISTORIC DISTRICTS

- Oaklawn**
Includes all residences along Oaklawn Avenue, the Oaklawn Portals, Oaklawn Bridge, and Waiting Station, and also Oaklawn Park which surrounds the War Memorial Building.
- El Centro-Indiana-Palm**
South Pasadena's first residential historic district. Excellent examples of modest 1880s-90s Classic Box and Shingle style homes interspersed with early twentieth century Craftsman and period revival residences.
- National Register Historic Business District**
The center of the original commercial area which developed in the 1880s with the construction of the Los Angeles and San Gabriel railway with its depot on the west side of Meridian Avenue. This area was the hub of the city's original educational, cultural, commercial, and political institutions.
- Ramona Avenue**
Craftsman neighborhood designed by G.L. Stimson. Many of the original residents were leaders in the Theosophy movement. The homes have been well preserved and are little changed from their original appearance.
- Oak-Laurel**
A neighborhood that blends

Ramona Avenue
Craftsman neighborhood designed by G.L. Stimson. Many of the original residents were leaders in the Theosophy movement. The homes have been well preserved and are little changed from their original appearance.

**SOUTH PASADENA
CENTENNIAL HERITAGE HOME**



**CLOUGH HOUSE
1532 RAMONA AVENUE
BUILT IN 1909**

**SOUTH PASADENA
CENTENNIAL HERITAGE HOME**



**JUDD HOUSE
1529 RAMONA AVENUE
BUILT IN 1907**



ATTACHMENT 2
Verbal Comments
(Click Here)