



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2021 AT 6:30 P.M.**

**VIA ZOOM**

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**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Hill called the Regular Design Review Board meeting on Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 6:39 p.m. The meeting was conducted remotely by video conference pursuant to the Executive Order N-29-20 issued by Governor Newsom. The Council Chambers, located at 1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, California, were closed. Members of the public attended the meeting via ZOOM.

**ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:**

Joe Carlson, Board Member  
Mark Smeaton, Board Member  
Kay Younger, Board Member  
Melissa Hon Tsai, Vice-Chair  
Samantha Hill, Chair

**COUNCIL LIAISON**

**PRESENT:**

Diana Mahmud, Mayor, Council Liaison

**STAFF**

**PRESENT:**

Kanika Kith, Planning Manager  
Malinda Lim, Associate Planner  
Lisa Krause, Contract Planner  
Veronica Ortiz-De Anda, Contract Planner

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Majority vote of the Board to proceed with Board business.

There were no changes requested and the Agenda was approved as submitted.

**DISCLOSURE OF SITE VISITS AND EX-PARTE CONTACTS**

Disclosure by Board of site visits and ex-parte contact for items on the agenda.

Board Member Younger stated she had driven by the Krispy Kreme building.

Board Member Carlson said he is at Pavilions regularly.

Chair Hill stated she had driven by both sites as well.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Public Comment – General (Non-Agenda Items)**

None.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

1. **Project No. 2343-SGN (Continued) – Sign Permit for an existing grocery store, Pavilions Grocery Store, located at 1213 Fair Oaks Avenue.**

**Recommendation:**

Approve, subject to conditions of approval.

**Presentation:**

Board Member Smeaton recused himself.

Contract Planner Krause presented the staff report.

Chair Hill asked staff for clarity regarding the code for signage and the 200 square-foot limit. She specifically wanted to know if it was “per use” and if it depended on what kind of sign, i.e. wall sign, monumental sign, awning sign.

Contract Planner Krause said that they were interpreting “per use” as the actual use of the property.

**Public Comments:**

None.

**Board Member Questions for Applicant:**

Applicant Paul Herman and Applicant Representative Cedric Craig were present on the phone.

Mr. Craig stated that the building has a grocery store, pharmacy and Starbucks and so it is a building with multiple uses.

Chair Hill asked for Board Member comments.

Board Member Carlson stated that staff said signs were internally illuminated but they appear black. He stated he was curious what color they were illuminated or if they were backlit.

Mr. Herman stated that the signs had a black perforated face so during the day they appear black and at night, they appear white.

Chair Hill asked the applicant which sign they were asked to remove.

Mr. Herman said it was the “drive-up-and-go” or e-commerce sign. He added that the way it worked was that customers ordered online and then store personnel brought groceries out to the vehicle.

With no further questions for the applicant and architect, Chair Hill closed the public hearing portion of the meeting.

**Board Member Discussion:**

Vice-Chair Tsai stated she liked the signage package and that it was well-balanced, simple and straightforward.

Chair Hill agreed and added that the building is set so far back that complying with the code limiting signage to 200 square feet, makes it difficult to read from certain distances. In addition, she found the “use” aspect of the code confusing. She stated that the store has a Starbucks inside which is no different from a strip mall with different tenants.

Board Member Younger agreed with Chair Hill, as did Vice-Chair Tsai.

Chair Hill added that signage is important and a “way finder.” She added that Starbucks is a separate tenant and should not be included towards overall use.

Board Member Younger stated that signage is important to visitors. She added that she knows what is inside the Pavilions store but people passing by looking for Starbucks need to see a sign.

Chair Hill asked Mr. Herman if there were plans as to how they would reduce the signage by 47.7 square feet. She asked if the plan was to remove signage or shrink signage. She stated she was trying to understand the impact.

Mr. Herman said that even if they removed the Pavilion’s sign on the north side elevation of the building, you would still have to significantly reduce the signs on the front of the building as well.

Chair Hill was concerned that shrinking down the signs another 47.7 square feet would make them difficult to view. She asked what other Board Members thought.

Board Member Carlson stated he felt that reducing it further from the drawing with the smaller signs would look odd.

Planning Manager Kith stated that Staff had same question and went back to look at how they handled Grocery Outlet and found they did include the monument sign with their total calculation.

Chair Hill stated that, given how they interpreted the code for the Grocery Outlet, they would not be able to remove monument sign from total square feet calculation.

Planning Manager Kith recommended continuing the item so that staff could discuss the use interpretation with the City Attorney.

Chair Hill asked Mr. Herman and Mr. Craig how they wanted to handle this. She stated they could reduce the size of the signage and get a Chair Review or they could continue the item and discuss it with the City Attorney to see if there were other ways to interpret the code or get a variance.

Mr. Herman said he would prefer not to reduce the size of the signage any further so he would prefer to continue the conversation with the City Attorney or Planning Commission.

Chair Hill asked if any Board Members wanted to make a motion.

Board Member Carlson said he would like to make a motion and wondered if it was reasonable to request a rendering of the conforming size sign so they could see how small it would actually be.

Mr. Herman said he would be agreeable to showing what the conforming size would look like. He added he liked the current design and providing the rendering would provide perspective.

**Action and Motion:**

MOTIONED BY BOARD MEMBER CARLSON, SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER YOUNGER, CARRIED 4-0, to continue the project and provide requested rendering of signage showing what the reduction of 47.7 square feet would look like.

- 2. Project No. 2326 –DRX/SGN – Design Review for a remodel and new business signs for an existing 1,672 square foot commercial restaurant building located at 710 Fair Oaks Avenue.**

Board Member Smeaton rejoined the meeting.

**Recommendation:**

Approve, subject to conditions of approval.

**Presentation:**

Contract Planner Ortiz-De Anda presented the staff report.

Vice-Chair Tsai asked if the applicant was allowed to put signage on the awning in front.

Contract Planner Ortiz-De Anda stated that they did not plan any signage on the awning but they did plan to put it on the front of the building, above the awning.

Planning Manager Kith added that the City does allow signage on canopies and cited Starbucks as an example.

Board Member Smeaton asked for clarification of bike rack placement. He said staff had recommended relocating the bicycle racks to the northwest corner.

Contract Planner Ortiz-De Anda stated Staff was asking the applicant to provide additional bicycle racks for patrons who wanted to enjoy donut and coffee on patio.

Board Member Carlson said he liked the idea of being able to exit the patio with steps or something rather than the current design where patrons need to walk back into the store from the patio in order to exit.

Contract Planner Ortiz-De Anda stated that there was sufficient space next to the patio and that the first option showed bicycle parking next to striped area.

Chair Hill She asked if there were discussions about pedestrian access and vehicular access. She stated she had concerns about the location of the ADA parking stall and customer access since the striping area was adjacent to the entry from Fair Oaks.

Contract Planner Ortiz-De Anda stated that they are not modifying any of the parking so this is how the previous tenant had the ADA parking stalls in the exact same place.

**Public Comments:**

None.

**Board Member Questions for Applicant:**

Contract Planner Ortiz-De Anda shared a video presentation from the applicant.

Chair Hill asked if the applicant was online and available for questions.

Contract Planner Ortiz-De Anda stated that Applicants Tammy Davis, Roger Glickman, and Jacob Webster were on the phone.

Ms. Davis from National Restaurant Designers introduced herself.

Chair Hill asked the Board if they had the questions for the applicant.

Vice-Chair Tsai asked if the planters in the front were removable.

Ms. Davis stated yes, they were removable.

Vice-Chair Tsai asked if they considered putting one more planter in the middle since there was a big gap between the two planters.

Ms. Davis said yes, it was possible to add a planter.

Board Member Smeaton thanked Ms. Davis for her presentation and stated they were all looking forward to Krispy Kreme and were glad they were replacing the ugly building with the Krispy Kreme Corporate design. He then asked if the brick veneer is painted brick or if it was an integral color white brick.

Ms. Davis said it was a painted brick.

Board Member Smeaton stated he agreed with Vice-Chair Tsai about the planters and he suggests planters all the way across the front to make a nice soft barrier between the raised patio and sidewalk. He also asked if the planters were irrigated or if they would require hand watering.

Ms. Davis responded that the planters would require periodic hand watering but they would get a plant that does not need watering often. She added that currently there is no irrigation or landscaping on the site.

Chair Hill closed the public hearing portion of the meeting.

**Board Member Discussion:**

Board Member Smeaton said he felt the Board agreed to extend the planters along the front of the building for a consistent look. He stated he felt torn about the egress from the patio but was leaning towards leaving the design as it was with no access out of the patio to the parking lot since this design makes it secure and safe. He also stated he agreed with Vice-Chair Tsai about too much white space on the front façade.

Vice-Chair Tsai agreed and added that dropping the sign just a little would work—it just needs a little white above the sign.

Board Member Smeaton said he didn't want the applicant to have to change the design and that an engineer would have to look at it but it's a suggestion and then it could be a Chair Review to see if it works and if doesn't work we could pass on it and the Chair could make that decision.

Chair Hill agreed with both Vice-Chair Tsai and Board Member Smeaton that the sign feels like it is too close to the top. She added that another option could be having four supports—two at each end to allow the sign to come down. She then asked Vice Chair Tsai and Board Member Smeaton if they had a sense of how far down do they want to drop the sign—a foot or eight inches.

Board Member Carlson asked for clarification: were they suggesting raising the parapet six inches or increase it dimensionally by six inches.

Planning Manager Kith said that the request was to increase it dimensionally by six inches.

Contract Planner Ortiz-De Anda asked Chair Hill about adding a condition about landscape maintenance. She stated that since the project had planters and the Board is requesting additional planters, perhaps a condition should be that the planters be maintained throughout the life of the project.

Chair Hill concurred that is was a great recommendation to add a condition of landscape maintenance.

Planning Manage Kith addressed Chair Hill and stated that this was a Design Review Board and that landscape management was related to operations and the applicant is not applying for a use permit. She suggested that Staff consult with the City Attorney and that if we do add that condition, it would be worked out with the Chair as to how the craft the condition. She added that if the Board wanted the lighting to stay, then they would have to strike the condition out.

Chair Hill said condition P13D was the condition they would like to omit for safety purposes. She added that the Board would like to add the condition for maintenance of the planters in the front. She asked if someone on the Board would like to make a motion.

Board Member Smeaton began to address the motion and with help from Ms. Kith.

**Action and Motion:**

MOTIONED BY BOARD MEMBER SMEATON AND SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR YOUNGER, CARRIED 5-0, to approve the design as submitted with the following additional conditions: 1. Add a continuous planter along the front patio; 2. Have a Chair Review about the façade or signage in relation to the building; 3. Keep the ADA parking space that exists and consider adding an additional ADA space behind the Krispy Kreme building; 4. Remove condition P13D.

**CONSENT ITEMS**

None

**PRESENTATIONS**

None

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**3. Phase 2, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) Ordinance Update: Project Introduction – Facilitating ADUs while implementing historic preservation standards.**

**Recommendation:**

Receive presentation and provide feedback.

**Presentation:**

Planning Manager Kith stated that the pre-recorded presentation shown at a Cultural Heritage Commission Workshop Meeting for community outreach. She added that Phase 2 included the development of design standard guidelines and procedures for historic properties in historic districts.

Architectural Historian and Preservation Planner, Evan St. Charles, with the firm ARG, presented the report.

Chair Hill asked if any Board Members had comments regarding ADUs on historic properties.

Board Member Carlson asked if they were referring to creating ADUs in existing structures or putting an ADU on top of an existing garage.

Planning Manager Kith said it was for converting existing structures or building new ADUs at historic properties or districts.

Board Member Smeaton said, as an architect, he had not built any ADUs in town lately and needs to think about it.

Vice-Chair Tsai stated she has been designing ADUs and getting inquiries. She added that in her experience, homeowners with historical homes are very aware of it and want to transfer that aesthetic to the ADU they want to build.

Board Member Younger stated she felt staff's recommendation was fine.

Vice-Chair Tsai stated that there has been precedence where an addition to a historic home is modern. She wanted to know if an applicant could come in and argue for something like that with the City.

Planning Manager Kith stated that she would write down the Board's questions and bring them to the City Consultant to explore.



Chair Hill said the other thing to consider is just because a property is designated as historic, does not mean it is great. She added that it just means they are part of a time period. She added that the whole point of ADUs are that the state legislature is mandating more affordable housing. She added that the more restrictions you put in place, the more the message becomes that we want to limit the amount of housing units that we're providing in the city which is a concern. She added that most of her friends want to build ADUs above garages and that they do not have the space to build on the property. She stated she is in favor of encouraging more ADUs.

Board Member Smeaton said he really thinks we should consider second stories over garages ADUs. He added that as far as modern ADUs built behind historic homes, it is hard to regulate from a guideline and standards and probably not a good road to go down since you cannot put enough guidelines out there to stop it and then we have a problem in town. He suggested that if you do have a nice historic property, the ADU design should tie into it.

Ms. Kith stated she felt she got great input from the Board and they will continue to welcome input via email.

## ADMINISTRATION

### 4. Comments from City Council Liaison

City Council Liaison, Mayor Mahmud, stated she was appreciative of how thorough the Board was in its consideration of projects and in particular, how they focused on safety concerns. She added that she thought the sign ordinance needed revision. Finally, Ms. Mahmud stated that she is sympathetic to the argument regarding separate function for the Pavilions sign and this is a case where the ordinance needs clarification to provide further guidance.

### 5. Comments from Board Members

Board Member Smeaton stated that the Board is looking at larger projects that require an art component to them and the Design Review Board would dovetail with the Public Art Commission. He added that it might be beneficial to have the Chair of the Public Art Commission come in to discuss the possibilities of art on a property.

Chair Hill stated that both Pavilions and Krispy Kreme have an art element to them but may not designate them as such. She added that the order of the process currently is going to the Design Review Board first and then after approval it gets determined if they need to provide the public art component. She, like Board Member Smeaton, stated she felt this was a missed opportunity

### 6. Comments from Subcommittees

Chair Hill stated that the only subcommittee at this time was herself and Vice-Chair Tsai on the ADU Subcommittee. She added that they had worked with the Consultant.

**7. Comments from Staff**

Staff provided ADU guidelines update.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**8. Adjourn to the regular Design Review Board meeting scheduled for April 1, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.**

There being no further matters, Chair Hill adjourned the Design Review Board meeting at 9:29 p.m.

APPROVED,

  
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Samantha Hill, Chair – Design Review Board

2/1/2021  
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Date