



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 2022 AT 6:30 P.M.

**CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1424 MISSION STREET, SOUTH PASADENA, CA 91030**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Regular Meeting of the South Pasadena Design Review Board was called to order by Chair, Samantha Hill, on Thursday, June 2, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was conducted from the Council Chambers located at 1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, California.

**ROLL CALL
PRESENT:**

Samantha Hill, Chair
Melissa Hon Tsai, Vice-Chair
Brian Nichols, Board Member

**STAFF
PRESENT:**

Matt Chang, Planning Manager
Braulio Madrid, Associate Planner
Sandra Robles, Associate Planner
Lilian Estrada, Administrative Assistant

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Majority vote of the Board to proceed with Board business.

Chair Hill asked if Board Members or Staff had any changes to Agenda, no requests. Agenda 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.

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Public Comment – General (Non-Agenda Items)

Administrative Assistant, Lillian Estrada, announced that there were no general public comments.

PUBLIC HEARING

2. 2029 Maycrest Avenue (APN: 5310-015-018), Project No. 2468-DRX – To allow the construction of a 496-square-foot one-story addition to the rear of an existing 868-square-foot one-story single-family residence within the Residential Single-Family (RS) zone.

Recommendation:

Approve the project subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

Presentation:

Associate Planner, Sandra Robles, presented the staff report. No presentation from applicant.

Vice-Chair Hon Tsai asked if the house number could be addressed.

Planning Manager, Matt Chang, said that Fire Department will require the address number be brought to compliance.

Chair Hill asked clarification regarding the threshold for a Major Design Review and asked if the 25 percent threshold included the garage square footage.

Ms. Robles responded that the 25 percent calculation only includes the square footage of the house.

Chair Hill asked if the Board Members had any questions of the applicant.

Vice-Chair Hon Tsai noted that the project did not include any exterior lighting and asked how the applicant was proposing to light the exterior of the proposed addition.

Applicant representative, Julie Lopez, responded that they could add lights along the sides of the sliding door.

Vice-Chair Hon Tsai said she would like to see that.

Chair Hill commented that the proposed windows are vinyl from the Galaxy series and asked if other windows were considered.

Ms. Lopez said that the windows were chosen due to cost savings.

Chair Hill asked if the applicant representative would like to add anything additional regarding the proposed project.

Ms. Lopez said she did not have anything to add.

Chair Hill opened the Public Comments.

Public Comments:

With no requests to speak, the public hearing was closed.

Board Member Discussion:

Vice-Chair Hon Tsai said that she would like to add a condition that the applicant bring the house number to code and she would like to see what type of lighting will be proposed.

Board Member Nichols did not have anything to add.

Chair Hill stated that the addition is straightforward, as it is at the back of the house and not visible from the street and materials are matching. Chair Hill recommends that the applicant look for new window specifications, but emphasized that this is only a recommendation for long-term benefits. Chair Hill agreed with the house number and lighting modifications, as recommended by Vice-Chair Hon Tsai, and stated that those items could be reviewed by the Chair.

Vice-Chair Hon Tsai made a motion to approve the project with the condition to update the house number to code and to propose lights by the back patio door for Chair Review.

Action and Motion:

MOTIONED BY VICE-CHAIR HON TSAI, SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER NICHOLS, CARRIED 3-0, to: approve the project based on staff recommendation with conditions of approval and the added conditions of updating the street address per Fire Code and a Chair Review for the proposed lighting.

3. **260 Saint Albans Avenue (APN: 5311-010-040), Project No. 2460-DRX – To allow the construction of a new two-story single-family residence with an attached two-car garage within the Residential Single-Family (RS) zone.**

Recommendation:

Approve the project, subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

Presentation:

Associate Planner, Braulio Madrid, presented the staff report. No presentation from applicant.

Vice-Chair Hon Tsai asked if railing was not subject to the height limit requirement.

Staff replied that the railing is not a structure and explained that the height limitation does not apply to accents or architectural elements, but stated that the Design Review Board can make recommendations.

Board Member Nichols asked about landscaping and noted that the code requires 25 percent, but the applicant was proposing 23 percent.

Staff stated that this is a preliminary landscape plan that will be finalized at a later time.

Board Member Nichols asked about the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and stated that the project is only four square feet under what is allowed. Board Member Nichols asked how the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) will impact the FAR.

Staff mentioned that the City's adopted ADU Ordinance allows up to 800 square feet to be exempt from FAR and lot coverage requirements, and further stated that the applicant is proposing an ADU of 800 square feet, as such, the FAR and lot coverage will not change.

Board Member Nichols stated that the code has a height limit of 24 feet and the Design Guidelines make suggestions for housing on sloped lots, specifically for buildings to be setback when having a 15-foot wall. Board Member Nichols stated that this project has a wall that is 35 feet in height and asked Staff for clarification.

Staff stated that the 24-foot height limitation is a standard applied to hillside development, which applies to lots exceeding an average slope of 20 percent. Staff explained that the average slope for the subject lot is 13 percent, in which case the height limitation is 35 feet.

Board Member Nichols asked about the downhill building walls not exceeding 15 feet.

Staff stated that the wall is not a retaining wall, but is included as part of the structure. Staff further stated that the retaining walls were terraced so that they would not exceed the maximum height requirement.

Board Member Nichols clarified that the guidelines referenced the building structure, not a retaining wall.

Staff stated that the 15-foot wall limitation for downhill lots is part of the Hillside Development Design Guidelines and would not apply to this property.

Chair Hill stated that she also had questions about the railing exceeding the height and stated that in her experience, anything—whether it is glass railing or not—if it is exceeding the height, then it exceeds the height, which she mentioned to be concerning. Chair Hill asked if the hillside calculations were completed and asked if it was 13 percent.

Staff stated that the calculation was included in the grading plan, Sheet A-P 100.

Chair Hill opened the question portion for the applicant and asked the applicant who would be residing at the property.

The applicant owners, Deepali and Harish Pareek, stated that they plan to reside at the residence. The applicant representative, Mahetzi Hernandez, was also present to answer questions.

Vice-Member Hon Tsai noted that there were two types of railings and asked why the applicant decided to include the two types of railing, which is glass and wood.

The applicant stated that the steel and wood railing is meant to warm up the exterior elevation. The applicant stated that the glass is meant to minimize the view obstruction.

Vice-Chair Hon Tsai asked if the wood on the overhang would match the white oak.

The applicant stated that the wood will match the wood on the trellis.

Vice-Chair Hon Tsai noted that wood requires a lot of maintenance and requires that it be treated every year and asked if the applicant had considered the upkeep.

The applicant stated that they will be updating the wood annually.

Vice-Chair Hon Tsai stated that the front (south) elevation includes an arch that is inset and a rectangular arch that is also inset and asked about the decision to create two different types of shape insets.

The applicant stated that the main arch is to have prominence of the primary access and it will not be pronounced.

Vice-Chair Hon Tsai asked about the marble screen and asked if it was block.

The applicant stated there was a sheet with materials. The applicant provided the materials board.

Vice-Chair Hon Tsai asked if it was a block.

The applicant stated that it was a sandstone or limestone tile.

Vice-Chair Hon Tsai noted that she liked the accent, but wondered about the detail.

Board Member Nichols asked about how the applicant plans to detail the tile because it can sometimes not be done well.

The applicant stated that the meeting of the materials will be important and noted that they have experience doing that.

Board Member Nichols asked about the driveway and asked if the current design is based on the grade change because the landscaping is limited due to the driveway.

The applicant stated it was and they would address the landscaping.

Board Member Nichols had follow-up questions regarding the arches and asked about the porch with the arch having a rectangular window and the front door is around the corner.

The applicant stated that the side door is based on feng shui design.

Board Member Nichols asked about the pop-out by the guest bedroom.

The applicant stated that it was a sitting area into the courtyard.

Board Member Nichols asked about the two wood eyebrows over the trellis and noted that they are different heights from respective windows and different dimensions.

The applicant noted that they were and added that it was a good comment.

Chair Hill asked about context with neighboring properties and stated the neighbors are one-story houses.

The applicant said that the property to the east is two stories and much taller.

Chair Hill stated that it would be helpful to see an elevation to provide context to neighbors and stated that she agrees with the Board regarding the arches and windows and stated that the juxtaposition is not balanced. She also noted that there are three different types of railings and noted that there are several finishes and products that look like wood but lower maintenance. Chair Hill also noted that the insets above the trellis are awkward because they are two separate pieces that are not continuous.

The applicant stated they were handmade and need structural support.

Chair Hill stated that there are a lot of different scales going on in the façades and noted that the windows vary, there are also three different types of railing and stated that the design needs to be tightened.

The applicant said that details repeat in different elevations.

Chair Hill stated that there is not a lot of consistency and everything seems to be slightly off and misaligned. Chair Hill stated that the parapet at the second story does not feel to be a good proportion.

The applicant stated there was a section.

Chair Hill stated she wanted to see dimensions from the design elements to see where those inconsistencies were.

Vice-Chair Hon Tsai wants to see radius and to see how it ties together. Vice-Chair Hon Tsai stated that the massing is great, but the design needs to be tweaked and refined to balance the design.

Chair Hill stated that there are different types of windows and asked if there was reason for that.

The applicant stated that most windows are either fixed or casement with charcoal finish.

Board Member Nichols stated that the details stated that it was bronze.

The applicant stated that it was a charcoal finish, but the name is luxury bronze and will match the garage door.

Board Member Nichols asked about the balcony and stated that it would be more consistent if it were wood.

Chair Hill stated that the balcony and screen above the garage appear to be an afterthought. Chair Hill also noted that there was wood that wrapped around, but does not wrap elsewhere and stated that the spiral staircase feels unbalanced.

The applicant stated that they may have to get rid of the deck.

Chair Hill opened the public comments for this item.

Public Comments:

Jeff Monsour lives across the street and stated that they are very happy with the proposal.

Chris Taylor, a neighbor who lives at 264 Saint Albans, stated that the applicant planted a 30-foot bamboo to screen, but it blocks his view from the second floor. Mr. Taylor said that this is against the code, which limits hedges to six feet.

With no other requests, to speak, Chair Hill closed the public hearing.

Board Member Discussion:

Board Member Nichols stated that he would like the applicant to find consistency to the design. Board Member Nichols added that the design needs to be refined.

Chair Hill stated that some elements of the design need tweaking and would also like to see neighborhood context. Chair Hill stated that Staff would need to address the bamboo and would like Staff to follow-up to ensure that it meets code requirements.

Vice-Chair Hon Tsai said that she does not agree that the railing is not structural and stated that the project exceeds the height limit.

Chair Hill agreed that the project exceeds the height limit and recommends that it be removed or brought down to meet height limits.

Board Member Nichols added that he would like to see an increase of landscaping to soften up the design and to allow the building to nestle into the landscape.

Chair Hill noted that the rendering and elevations are not consistent and do not show dimensions between windows and other design features.

Vice-Chair Hon Tsai asked if a subcommittee would be appropriate for this project.

Chair Hill agreed with the suggestion of subcommittee and asked for volunteers.

Board Member Nichols and Vice-Chair Hon Tsai agreed to be part of the subcommittee to revise the design, specifically some of the architectural details.

Planning Manager, Matt Chang, asked the Board if they would like to continue the item to a date certain, so that the item would not have to be renoticed.

Chair Hill reopened the public hearing to discuss the subcommittee and the applicant's timeframe for revisions.

Associate Planner, Braulio Madrid, stated that June 27, 2022 would be the deadline to received revised plans.

The applicant agreed that they would be able to complete revisions by the deadline.

Chair Hill closed the public comment.

Board Member Nichols made a motion to continue the project and create a subcommittee for the next regular meeting.

Chair Hill seconded the motion.

Action and Motion:

MOTIONED BY BOARD MEMBER NICHOLS, SECONDED BY CHAIR HILL, to: form a subcommittee, volunteered by Vice-Chair Hon Tsai and Board Member Nichols to review changes to project before the next regular meeting on July 7, 2022.

Discussion Item

4. 2022 Annual Commission Report

Chair Hill asked staff for clarification on the actual year of review.

Planning Manager, Matt Chang, said it was accomplishments for 2021 and a work plan for 2022

Mr. Chang provided background on the report, stating that the report will be presented at the upcoming Commission Conference.

Chair Hill asked about the requirement to provide a brief message and asked if the message should be sent to staff for review.

Mr. Chang stated that the message can be sent to staff for review.

Chair Hill inquired about the numbers of the report and stated that page 4 of the report included 63 Chair Reviews and she had counted 67. Chair Hill inquired about the work plan, specifically "Task 5-C" regarding affordable housing policies, and asked if the Board will be reviewing design guidelines.

Mr. Chang confirmed that the Board will be reviewing Objective Development Standards for housing applications that staff is currently working on with consultants.

Chair Hill inquired about section five of the work plan, and stated there is discussion a housing division within the city and does not know the timeframe or if it is moving forward.

Mr. Chang stated that the department is currently in the process of creating a new position for a housing analyst to ensure that the City is meeting housing goals. Mr.

Chang stated that if the Board is in agreement to approve the draft of the 2022 Annual Commission Report, that they may make a motion.

Action and Motion:

MOTIONED BY VICE-CHAIR HON TSAI, SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER NICHOLS, CARRIED 3-0, to: approve the draft.

ADMINISTRATION

5. Comments from Board Members

None.

6. Comments from Subcommittees

None.

7. Comments from Staff

Planning Manager, Matt Chang, reiterated that the Congress Commission will be held on June 22, 2022. Mr. Chang also mentioned that the Planning Division is currently recruiting for the Deputy Director position. Additionally, Mr. Chang, mentioned that the Objective Development Standards will be presented before the Board as a workshop. Lastly, Mr. Chang stated that the Planning Division is working on completing minutes for the Board to review.

ADJOURNMENT

8. Adjourn to the regular Design Review Board meeting scheduled for July 7, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

There being no further matters, Chair, Samantha Hill, adjourned the Design Review Board meeting at 8:12 p.m.

APPROVED,


Samantha Hill, Chair – Design Review Board

11/03/2022
Date