



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2020 AT 6:30 P.M.

VIA ZOOM

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Mark Smeaton called the Regular Meeting of the South Pasadena Design Review Board to order on Thursday, November 5, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was conducted remotely and held by video conference pursuant to the Executive Order N-29-20, issued by Governor Newsom.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Mark Smeaton, Chair
Samantha Hill, Vice-Chair
Melissa Hon Tsai, Board Member
Kay Younger, Board Member
Yael Lir, Board Member

COUNCIL LIAISON

PRESENT:

Richard Schneider, M.D.

STAFF

PRESENT:

Kanika Kith, Planning Manager
Malinda Lim, Associate Planner
Karolina Gorska, Contract Planner

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Majority vote of the Board to proceed with Board business.

The Agenda was approved as submitted.

DISCLOSURE OF SITE VISITS AND EX-PARTE CONTACTS

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

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Project No. 2343-DRX – Design Review for remodel of an existing 33,355 square-foot grocery store (Pavilions Grocery Store) located at 1213 Fair Oaks Avenue.

Recommendation:

Approve, subject to conditions of approval.

Presentation:

Chair Smeaton recused himself and stated that his office was within 1,000 feet of the project site.

Contract Planner Gorska presented the Staff Report.

Vice-Chair Hill stated that there were no further questions for the applicant and asked staff if there were any public comments.

Public Comments:

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

Applicant Presentation:

There was no presentation from the applicant though he was available to answer questions.

Board Member Lir asked the applicant if they would be screening the trash enclosure since it was so visible from the parking lot.

Architect Cedric Craig stated they planned to replace the current wire fabric fence on the existing wall and redo the gate. He added they would also be creating concrete walls.

Board Member Lir suggested adding trees that shade the parking lot to the applicant. Mr. Craig stated that they would have to maintain the parking count and he would have to check with the folks at Albertsons to see if they wanted to do it.

Board Member Tsai asked the applicant if they were adding the reveal between the two paint colors on the front elevation.

Mr. Craig stated that there was a reveal between the two colors and it would be painted. He added that the entire wall would have a new cement plaster finish.

Board Member Tsai asked about the thickness of the new construction considering it would be cut into the current sidewalk.

Mr. Craig stated that they would pour out the sidewalk since they will be taking about five inches of the approximately six-foot sidewalk.

Board Member Tsai asked if they used the light fixtures elsewhere on the building.

Mr. Craig stated the lights extend all along the front façade beyond the squares in the picture.

Board Member Tsai asked if this was accent lighting.

Mr. Craig stated they were primarily accent lights but also illuminated the hardscape below. He added that there was a lot of lighting in the parking lot and on the building as well.

Vice-Chair Hill asked the applicant why, considering there is a pandemic, there were no exterior canopies to shade the public.

Mr. Craig replied that there was a canopy spanning across the two entrances. In addition, he stated, people could call in orders and employees can bring groceries to their cars (“drive up and go”).

Vice-Chair Hill asked if the striping in the parking lot was going to reflect the drive up and go.

Mr. Craig stated he imagined Pavilions would stripe to reflect this signage within the configuration of the existing parking stall design.

Vice-Chair Hill stated she felt it was a lost opportunity since landscaping and panels would break up the sea of cars. She then asked about the genesis of the artwork on the north façade.

Mr. Craig stated they did research and decided to use the photo Colorado Bridge in three panels.

Vice-Chair Hill stated she knew the Public Art Commission would be reviewing it but it was a Pasadena image, not a South Pasadena image, and she had concerns about the execution as well.

Ms. Kith stated that the Planning Staff asked the same question of Pavilions when this project was proposed.

Mr. Paul Herman of Vons stated they considered the other larger project but it was very expensive. He added that corporate decided to bring the design of the façade up to date first and then they will consider the larger project.

Vice-Chair Hill closed the public portion of the meeting and opened the Board Member Discussion.

Board Member Discussion:

Board Member Tsai stated that like Board Member Lir, she did not like the stacked stone and felt it was too massive. She added that she liked the lights since they have a halo effect.

Board Member Younger stated she agreed with Board Member Tsai and Board Member Lir.

Board Member Tsai stated she was not sure how the Public Art Commission worked but suggested a mural instead of the panels.

Planning Manager Kith stated that staff suggested the condition of a review by the Public Art Commission since they were concerned that the three panels may not be considered art. She added that it was up to this Board if they agreed with that suggestion and wanted to make it a condition.

Mr. Cedric asked the Board to consider holding the art as a placeholder, knowing something else would replace the image.

Board Member Tsai asked Planning Manager Kith when they would know if the project is actually subject to the art requirement.

Planning Manager Kith stated they would not know if the project will be subject to the public art requirement until the project is with the Building Department and the building valuation is determined. Planning Manager Kith suggested the Board make the art panels a placeholder and a condition of the project regardless of if the project is subject to the art requirement.

Action and Motion:

MOTIONED BY BOARD MEMBER TSAI AND SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER LIR, CARRIED 4-0, to continue the project with suggestions that the materials of the façade and lighting be studied; additional trees be considered for parking lot; and artwork be reviewed by the Public Art Commission.

Chair Smeaton rejoined the meeting.

2. **Project No. 2328-NID/DRX – Notice of Intent to Demolish a 1,442 square-foot, single-family home and detached 1-car garage and Design Review of two new, two-story, single-family homes (2,555 sq. ft. and 1,543 sq. ft.) and a 5-car underground garage at 1502 Bank Street.**

Recommendation:

Approve, subject to conditions of approval.

Presentation:

Contract Planner Gorska presented the staff report.

Vice-Chair Hill asked if these were two single-family homes on a lot or if one is an ADU.

Planning Manager Kith explained the lot was zoned for two single-family homes with the same owner.

Vice-Chair Hill asked for clarification of staff's recommended condition for the three-foot setback requirement on the west elevation.

Planning Manager Kith stated that, for the west elevation of the front unit, staff asked for articulation to break up the wall. She added that the applicant proposed vertical articulation by recessing a portion of the west wall but it is only 1.5-foot recess and that staff is recommending a condition to require the three-foot code recess. She added that the Board could waive the 3-foot setback requirement if they find it appropriate.

Board Member Lir had no questions but suggested the light fixtures looked too big.

With no further questions for staff, Chair Smeaton opened up the public comment portion of the hearing.

Public Comments:

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

Applicant Presentation:

Staff shared a pre-recorded presentation from the applicant.

Vice-Chair Hill asked the applicant if the site was flat or had gradation and the overall building height from grade.

Applicant/architect Joohyun Her stated the site is flat and that they want to raise it 2 feet 6 inches to 3 feet. She added that the overall building height from grade is 29 feet, approximately two feet higher than the neighborhood.

Board Member Tsai asked about the choice of the front door.

Ms. Her stated it was a modern interpretation with wood finishes.

Board Member Tsai stated she felt there was a lot of Spanish detailing but the door looked off to her.

Ms. Her said she could modify the door.

Chair Smeaton stated he saw that staff suggested reducing the entry element to bring it down but did not see these notes incorporated in the drawings.

Ms. Her said she got the comments late and she felt that lowering the entry did not fit with the massing.

Chair Smeaton stated that the home had a very narrow floor plate but it was a very tall structure and asked if she would be considering nine-foot plates on main floor instead of ten.

Ms. Her replied that the homeowner is Feng Shui driven and concerned about having enough light and wanted ten-foot plates. Ms. Her stated she would revisit this with the homeowner.

Chair Smeaton stated he wanted to reduce the height of the structure and would like to see options when the applicant came back like such as lowering the parking garage into the grade. He then asked for last questions and hearing none closed the public hearing and opened Board Member Discussion.

Board Member Discussion:

Vice-Chair Hill stated she was concerned about the massing on this narrow site and suggested lowering the building. She added that the eaves needed work.

Chair Smeaton asked the Board how they felt about the entry.

Board Member Tsai suggested adding wood post and beam detail.

Board Member Younger stated she felt the building overshadows the neighbors. She stated she also had concerns about the front door.

Chair Smeaton added that it the style of the house is not quite modern and not Mediterranean and is a mishmash.

Vice-Chair Hill said the west elevation looks monolithic and needs more articulation.

Chair Smeaton stated he liked the staff-recommended changes that the applicant already addressed and the east elevation. He added there are too many lighting fixtures.

Vice-Chair Hill stated she liked the back house more than the front house and the east elevation more than the west.

Chair Smeaton stated that perhaps the applicant should consider a sloped roof with a parapet.

Planning Manager Kith added that staff had recommended to reduce the number of light fixtures, as it is a residential area and will be too bright. She suggested the Board make it a condition.

Action and Motion:

MOTIONED BY VICE-CHAIR HILL AND SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER LIR, CARRIED 5-0, to continue the project to a date uncertain and have applicant revise with recommendations including: looking at the overall massing, and height of project; consider

floor-to-floor height as well as dropping the elevation and pulling down the parking; study the roof design slope and eaves; front entry of front building and the front door specifically; remove light fixtures; look to redesign the west elevation to provide better articulation.

3. Project No. 2327-DRX – Design Review for façade improvements to a two-story, single-story house located at 732 Bonita Avenue.

Recommendation:

Approve, subject to conditions of approval.

Presentation:

Associate Planner Lim presented the staff report.

Vice-Chair Hill asked if the planter in the right-of-way had been revised already in the drawings or if staff was asking them to be revised.

Associate Planner Lim stated the planter box would have to be reduced in the renderings in order to not encroach on right-of-way.

Board Member Lir asked for clarification on the L-shaped object on front elevation.

Associate Planner Lim stated it was a wood trellis.

Chair Smeaton stated that with no further questions and asked staff if there were any public comments.

Public Comments:

Associate Planner Lim stated there was one written comment and one verbal comment, which she played.

Michael O’Sullivan from 756 Bonita Drive stated the revisions to the façade will make it more colorful and interesting and he supports the project.

Applicant Presentation:

Applicant Patrick Szurpicki made a presentation.

Board Member Lir asked for confirmation that the steel will not bleed or rust into the concrete when wet.

Mr. Szurpicki stated he has done quite a few projects with this material and it has a sealer and has not bled onto the concrete.

Vice-Chair Hill asked about the cantilever extension over the entryway and how it would be supported.

Mr. Szurpicki stated that they are hoping to continue the cantilever line in the same trajectory. He stated that they would build a new steel frame that is bolted onto the existing structure and then it is stucco clad.

Board Member Tsai asked if the window in the master bedroom was elongated.

Mr. Szurpicki said the master window was actually taller and they were trying to do a floor-to-ceiling window.

Chair Smeaton asked if the plaster had a smooth finish.

Mr. Szurpicki said yes, they wanted a smooth trial plaster finish.

Chair Smeaton stated he agreed with rest of the Board that the design was great. With no further questions for the applicant, he closed the public portion of the meeting.

Board Member Discussion:

Vice-Chair Hill stated it was a great design and had no conditions.

Board Member Younger stated she loved the design and that it was an improvement.

Board Member Lir stated she loved the beautiful design.

Board Member Tsai agreed with the others and added that the architect did a great job.

Chair Smeaton stated he agreed with everyone and asked for a motion.

Action and Motion:

MOTIONED BY BOARD MEMBER LIR AND SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER YOUNGER, CARRIED 5-0, to approve the project with conditions of approval.

- 4. Project No. 2205-NID/HDP/DRX/VAR, Notice of intent to demolish Design Review, Hillside Development Permit and three Variances for modification and addition to a single-family residence at 1312 Meridian Avenue (APN:5319-029-017)**

Recommendation:

Approve, subject to conditions of approval.

Presentation:

Board Member Tsai recused herself from this project, as she was the applicant's representative.

Associate Planner Lim presented the staff report.

Vice-Chair Hill asked for clarification the variance regarding remediation.

Associate Planner Lim stated that they are required to remediate 50.6% and the proposed design is at 32.7%.

Board Member Younger asked if this was the same project that several neighbors stated concerns about the geography and swimming pool. She added that she thought all of those issues had been addressed.

Associate Planner Lim stated that the Building Department will ask for a final geotechnical and structural report to ensure the project will be stable and will not have negative effects on neighbors.

Chair Smeaton stated yes, it was the property with several neighborhood concerns. He added that he had a concern about variance number 3, the downhill wall being over 15 feet.

Public Comments:

Associate Planner Lim stated that staff had received two written comments and four verbal comments.

The first verbal comment was from a resident from El Cerrito Circle who is adjacent to the project. She stated was concerned about potential damage to her property due to the proximity of this property to hers.

Neil, from 1316 Meridian Avenue, stated he was concerned about safety, noise, and dust, during construction.

Another verbal comment came from Jesse who said his parents lived at 1316 Meridian and his concern was safety and privacy. He added that he suggested a retaining wall.

Pam from 1316 Meridian Ave stated she worried about her own safety as well as her other neighbors' property noting it will also disrupt the soil. She requested a retaining wall.

Applicant Presentation:

The applicant/owner made a presentation.

Vice-Chair Hill asked the applicant how long had this project been under review by the various commissions.

Mr. Donaldson stated the project began in January 2019 when they were instructed to hire a historian. He then detailed its journey through several commissions.

Vice-Chair Hill noted that the neighbor's concerns involved the pool and asked staff if the pool element falls under the Design Review Board's purview.

The applicant interjected that there are rules about hillside pools and they worked hard and met with professionals so the pool would be to code.

Planning Manager Kith stated that the Design Review Board could provide any design recommendations that the Board feels necessary.

Chair Smeaton stated he noticed a three-foot retaining wall and suggested that this must help distinguish the property from the neighbors.

Mr. Donaldson stated it was created as an area to plant trees to protect privacy of neighbors and to protect the pool from tree roots.

Chair Smeaton complimented the applicant on the new windows and front entry stair configuration. He closed the public hearing portion of the meeting and opened the Board Member Discussion.

Board Member Discussion:

Vice-Chair Hill stated that she did not have concerns with the first two variances. The final variance, the height, was tricky to achieve since it was hillside property. She added that it was all well designed. She appreciated the safety element with driveway and garage. She added that the pool concern from neighbors was understandable and recommended the applicant reach out to a consultant to make sure it was done professionally.

Board Member Younger agreed with Vice-Chair Hill and added she loved the design.

Chair Smeaton agreed with Vice-Chair Hill’s points as well. He understood the neighbor concerns but felt it could be a success if the applicant mitigated impact.

Action and Motion:

MOTIONED BY CHAIR SMEATON AND SECONDED BY VICE-CHAIR HILL, CARRIED 4-0, to approve the project as designed to the Planning Commission with conditions of approval.

Chair Smeaton invited Board Member Tsai to rejoin the meeting.

CONSENT ITEMS

- 5. Design Review Board Minutes – May 14, 2020 Meeting**
There were no changes requested and the Minutes were approved as submitted.
- 6. Design Review Board Minutes – October 1, 2020 Meeting**
Approved.
There were no changes requested and the Minutes were approved as submitted.

PRESENTATIONS

None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

7. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) Ordinance Update

Recommendation:

Formation of a subcommittee to work with staff on updating the Accessory Dwelling Units Ordinance.

Presentation:

Planning Manager Kith presented an update.

Chair Smeaton suggested Board Member Tsai step in his place on the ADU subcommittee.

Board Member Tsai stated she would like to be on the subcommittee.

Action and Motion:

MOTIONED BY CHAIR SMEATON AND SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER LIR, CARRIED 5-0, to approve members Vice-Chair Hill and Board Member Tsai as the ADU subcommittee.

ADMINISTRATION

8. Comments from City Council Liaison

City Council Liaison Schneider complimented the Board on their great work improving projects and announced that this was his last meeting since he would no longer be on the City Council in January.

9. Comments from Board Members

None.

10. Comments from Subcommittees

None.

11. Comments from Staff

None.

ADJOURNMENT

12. Adjourn to the regular Design Review Board meeting scheduled for December 3, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

There being no further matters, Chair Mark Smeaton, adjourned the Special Design Review Board meeting at 9:46 p.m.

APPROVED,



Mark Smeaton, Chair – Design Review Board

Date 1/11/2024