



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2024 AT 6:30 P.M.**

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

---

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Nichols called the Regular Meeting of the Design Review Board to order on Thursday, March 7, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was conducted in person at the Council Chambers located at 1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, California.

**ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:**

Brian Nichols, Chair  
Melissa Hon Tsai, Vice-Chair  
Samantha Hill, Board Member  
James Martin, Board Member  
Kay Younger, Board Member

**COUNCIL LIAISON**

**PRESENT:**

Michael Cacciotti, Council Liaison

**STAFF**

**PRESENT:**

Matt Chang, Planning Manager  
Braulio Madrid, Associate Planner  
Mackenzie Goldberg, Assistant Planner  
Lillian Estrada, Administrative Secretary

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Majority vote of the Board to proceed with Board business.

Planning Manager Chang requested to switch the order of items 7 and 8 to accommodate Assistant Planner Goldberg at her last meeting of the Design Review Board.

The Agenda was approved with the only change being switching the order of items 7 and 8.

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

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

None.

**CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS**

**2. Minutes from the Special Joint Meeting with Planning Commission of 9/20/23**

**3. Minutes from the Regular Meeting of 11/2/23**

**4. Minutes from the Special Meeting of 1/11/24**

**5. Minutes from the Regular Meeting of 2/1/24**

The Consent Calendar items were approved as submitted.

**PUBLIC HEARING – CONTINUED ITEM**

**6. Project No. 2507-DRX:**

A request for a Design Review Permit (2507-DRX) to add a 416 square-foot, first floor addition, a 528 square-foot attached garage and a 1,036 square-foot, second-story addition to an existing 2,332 square-foot one-story single-family dwelling at 1824 Hanscom Drive (APN: 5308-018-031). In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project qualifies for Categorical Exemption under Section 15301, Class 1 (Existing Facilities).

**Recommendation:**

Finding the project exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Section 15301, Class 1 (Existing Facilities). Approve the project, subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

**Presentation:**

Assistant Planner Goldberg presented the staff report and stated it was continued from the November 2, 2023 DRB Meeting.

There were no questions for staff.

**Applicant Presentation:**

Assistant Planner Goldberg stated the applicant did not have a presentation but was present and available to answer questions.

There were no questions for the applicant.

**Public Comments:**

There were no public comments for this item.

**Board Member Discussion:**

Chair Nichols stated he felt this was an improvement.

A robust discussion ensued and the Board Members agreed that the applicant addressed all comments with their revisions.

Vice-Chair Tsai noted the first floor plan had not been updated in the current packet.

**Action and Motion:**

MOTIONED BY VICE-CHAIR TSAI AND SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER HILL, CARRIED 5-0, to approve the project as presented with the condition that the first floor plan be updated to reflect what the elevation shows, specifically by the brick material.

<b>PUBLIC HEARING</b>
-----------------------

- 8. PROJECT NO. 2562-NID/DRX** – A request for a Design Review Permit to demolish an existing 655 sq. ft. single-family dwelling and to construct a 1,309 sq. ft. two-story residence, a 1,747 sq. ft. two-story residence, and a 449 sq. ft. two-car garage located at 827 El Centro Street (APN: 5315-019-027). In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under Section 15303, Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures).

**Recommendation:**

Finding the project exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15303, Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures). Approve the project, subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

**Presentation:**

Vice-Chair Tsai recused herself from this project, as she lives within 1,000 feet of the project site.

Assistant Planner Goldberg presented the staff report.

Board Member Hill asked if the garage was part of the review.

Assistant Planner Goldberg stated it was part of the review but the accessory dwelling unit (ADU) above the garage was not part of the review.

**Applicant Presentation:**

The applicant did not have a presentation but was present to answer any questions.

There were no questions for the applicant.

**Public Comments:**

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

**Board Member Discussion:**

Board Member Hill stated she appreciated the materials and attention to detail. She added that she thought the back structure was designed well but the front structure had a lot of roof.

Board Member Martin stated he did not mind the roofline for the front house.

A robust discussion about the front house roofline.

**Action and Motion:**

MOTIONED BY BOARD MEMBER HILL AND SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER YOUNGER, CARRIED 4-0, to approve the project as submitted with the condition of a chair review to address the front house's roof articulation.

Vice-Chair Tsai rejoined the meeting.

- 7. PROJECT NO. 2538-DRX/NID** – A request for a Design Review Permit to demolish an existing 1,605 sq. ft. single-family dwelling and construct a new 2,618 sq. ft. single-family dwelling with attached two-car garage for property located at 250 St. Albans Avenue (APN: 5311-010-042). In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under Section 15303, Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures).

**Recommendation:**

Find the project exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15303, Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures). Approve the project, subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

**Presentation:**

Associate Planner Madrid presented the staff report.

Chair Nichols asked for and received confirmation that the materials on the front façade did not wrap around the side.

Vice-Chair Tsai asked what the rules were for recessing change in planes on the side of a property.

Associate Planner Madrid stated that the code varied based on architectural style and no recess was required with this project since this is modern architecture.

Vice-Chair Tsai asked about the design intent for not having the materials used in the front, wrap around the corner, as Chair Nichols had commented.

Project Architect Yutong Xie stated that the front of the building was designed with a lot of color since it is visible from the street but the side was not since it is barely visible from the front. She added that they were open to adding more color to the side elevation.

Board Members asked a variety of questions about materials used on the various elements of the house including roof, doors, rails and window frames.

**Applicant Presentation:**

None.

**Public Comments:**

Resident Joe Dadourian stated he lives adjacent to the property and that to say it's not hillside is incorrect. He added that he had to build his house on caissons and wondered if they will have to and if they will reinforce the retaining wall between the two properties since it is caving in.

In a rebuttal, Ms. Xie stated their property is very flat and that if the soil engineer insists on caissons they will comply.

Associate Planner Madrid stated that presently, the project is planning to retain the current wall between properties. He added that if during plan check it is determined that the wall cannot sustain the new project, more requirements will be added.

Vice-Chair Tsai asked if a licensed land surveyor certified the project as a non-hillside site.

Mr. Dadourian reiterated that he believed it was definitely a hillside property and the retaining wall was crumbling.

Associate Planner Madrid stated the property is zoned RS with an average slope of 7.8% and that the code states it must be 20% average slope. He added that the

architect stated that a licensed engineer analyzed the property.

**Board Member Discussion:**

There was a robust conversation about the façade feeling not quite finished with a lot going on and many inconsistencies including the fenestration, rooflines, use of materials.

As the conversation wrapped up, Planning Manager Chang suggested the Board consider in the revision, the crumbling wall mentioned by the neighbor during public comments.

**Action and Motion:**

MOTIONED BY BOARD MEMBER HILL AND SECONDED BY VICE-CHAIR TSAI, CARRIED 5-0, to continue the project to the May 2, 2024 Design Review Board meeting and form a subcommittee of Vice-Chair Tsai and Board Member Martin to assist in working with the applicant and staff on revising the project.

**ADMINISTRATION**

**9. Comments from City Council Liaison**

City Council Liaison Cacciotti introduced himself as this year’s liaison to the Design Review Board and gave an update on the region including on the Gold (A) Line, South Coast AQMD, and City Council.

**10. Comments from Board Members**

None.

**11. Comments from Subcommittees**

None.

**12. Comments from Staff**

Planning Manager Chang thanked Assistant Planner Goldberg for her service, as this was her last Design Review Board meeting. He then stated that the Planning Commission recently granted a project at 1020 El Centro Street, the Old School District property, a conditional use permit to allow the space to be used as a concert hall. He added the next step is a remodel of the property.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**13. Adjourn to the Regular Design Review Board meeting scheduled for April 4, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.**

There being no further matters, Chair Nichols adjourned the Regular Design Review Board meeting at 7:52 p.m.

APPROVED,



\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian Nichols, Chair – Design Review Board

3/1/24

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date