



Community Development  
Department

# Memo

DATE: August 3, 2023  
TO: Design Review Board  
FROM: Sandra Robles, Associate Planner  
RE: Additional Documents, Item No. 2, Public Hearing  
2031 Crestlake Avenue (Project No. 2506-DRX)

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The attached written comments were received by 12:00 p.m. on August 3, 2023.

**From:**  
**To:** [PlanningComments](#)  
**Subject:** 2031 Crestlake Avenue, Agenda date: 8/3/2023  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 2, 2023 9:23:21 PM

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To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Lingqi Tang. I am the owner of 2027 Crestlake Ave. My property is located directly north of the proposed project 2031. I have following concerns:

1. In determining if the subject property is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, only one house 2035 Crestlake has been used as a comparison property (ref. Design Review Board Report, page 5). Please include my house as a comparison property, a 1,288 square feet Ranch-style house, for your evaluation regarding compatibility. Note, our neighborhood block consists of 25 houses in Crestlake Avenue, 8 houses in Elm Park Street, and 30 houses in Empress Avenue. There are no side-by-side two-story houses consecutively built nor Modern Farmhouse style houses that can be found; I want to know if the proposed project breaks the current pattern in the neighborhood.

2. Most houses in our neighborhood were built in 1950. Wood structures rest on the concrete foundation. Cracking walls and sloping floors are common in many houses. The upgrade of 2031 Crestlake Ave requires altering the foundation by excavating 270 cubic yards below the existing house. The plan to build a basement may disturb the existing soil and foundation conditions of the neighborhood, adding additional stress and/or redistributing the existing stress. If the excavation process or construction causes damages to my property, now or in the future, may I request that the proposed project property owner and/or contractor be liable for damages?

3. I am a senior resident. Sunlight is very important to seniors but the proposed second floor north-facing wall blocks the sunlight from my south facing windows. I am requesting that the roof shape stay the same.

4. I have become very anxious about the proposed changes to the property next door. People can sit or stand on the second floor balcony or look through second-floor north facing windows and see straight into my backyard and rooms. Please respect my privacy by eliminating the second floor balcony and north facing windows. Please note, the property 2035 which has been used as a compatible house, does not have any north facing windows nor balcony on the second floor.

**From:**  
**To:** [PlanningComments](#)  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Project # 2506-DRX Address: 2031 Crestlake Ave, Agenda date: 8/3/2023  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 2, 2023 7:10:15 PM

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Name: Helena Lee  
Agenda item: 08/3/2023, Project # 2506-DRX, 2031 Crestlake Ave

Dear members of the Design Review Board

I, Helena Lee, am the owner of 2035 Crestlake Ave, right next door to 2031. Since my house was used as the comparable object in the proposal, I would like to provide some context. We moved in 1982 and had to add a bedroom when my son was born in 1984. We had planned an addition on the first floor in 1987, but the set back requirement at the time, would only allow a ONE foot extension at the back, so our only option was to add a second floor since I did not want to change the out look of the house. I told my designer what we needed and told him I wanted the design to look naturally built with the original house. We love the neighborhood and we try our best to maintain the house. Since receiving the notification from the City, we have become anxious about the proposed changes to the property next door. We reviewed the proposal and have the following concerns:

1. They are proposing to excavate 7,290 cu. ft. below the existing house. I am concerned this excavation will jeopardize the integrity of the soil. This significant excavation could have impact on soil movement for surrounding properties, especially since my house is a mere 12 feet away. Also, LA county is earthquake sensitive zone - you can find cracks on the driveway cement and interior cracks on the wall. If the excavation does create vulnerabilities for the surrounding properties, who will take care of the damages? Which party is responsible monitoring the ground movement during and after construction?
2. The proposed patio and basement may significantly change the drainage profile of the property. The 395 sq. ft patio, presumably paves over the ground in the backyard, which could increase runoff from the property. We presume the new basement will also involve some type of water mitigation (e.g. new drains, sump pump, etc.) the position and function of which could have impact on neighboring properties. Failing to properly manage water drainage can have a major impact. Just look at the recent landslide situation in Rolling Hills Estates involving 12 houses. These were newer houses and presumably received approval from a soil engineers before they were built.
3. The project called the design style Modern Farm House. There are no other farm house styles in the neighborhood and proposed elements are not consistent with the other houses. For example, the majority of houses in our area have front porches of less than 20 sq ft. This is less than 15% of the proposed 150 sq ft porch proposed for this house. Similarly, my patio which is about average size in the area is 110 sq ft. This is less than one-third the size of the proposed 395 sq ft patio. None of the houses in the area have a balcony. Despite having these features that are 4-8 times larger than the rest of the houses, the lot size is about the same at 6,500 sq.ft. Taking all of this into account, how can you call these design features in harmony with the rest of the neighborhood?
4. 2031 Crestlake was built in 1950 and has not been significantly updated since then. A study report should be done about possible asbestos material and if found removed safely. This will save lives.
5. When a permit is granted, should there be a reasonable time limit for the project so as to minimize the inconvenience of the neighbors? I walk in the Marengo and Milan areas, some of the projects with the fenced in area last more than a year. If there is penalty that should help. My addition in 1987 was finished in about 4 months.

6. Privacy is important to everyone. The proposed second floor balcony is overseeing the neighbors backyards and living rooms. Please respect the neighbor's privacy by eliminating the second floor balcony.

7. Our family has lived in this neighborhood for more than 40 years, much like many of the families in this neighborhood. We have always felt that South Pasadena was a senior-friendly city and that it took great pride in recognizing it's own history and culture through preservation of design style. What is being proposed next door to me feels like a departure from all of that. The proposed plans seem to focus more on maximizing investment regardless of the potential cost and harm it could cause to surrounding properties. The plans alone have already caused considerable anxiety within our community of neighbors that have lived here for 40-50 years. The financial benefit for one house should not out weight the damage it could cause an entire community.