

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA PLANNING COMMISSION  
CONVENED THIS JANUARY 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012, 6:30 P.M.  
AT THE AMEDEE O. DICK RICHARDS JR.  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 1424 MISSION STREET**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ROLL CALL</b></p>	<p><b>Meeting convened at:</b> 6:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Commissioners Present:</b> J. Stephen Felice, Chair Anthony George, Secretary Evan Davis, Commissioner Steven Friedman, Commissioner Kristen Morrish, Commissioner</p> <p><b>Council Liaison:</b> Robert S. Joe</p> <p><b>Staff Present:</b> David G. Watkins, Director of Planning and Building Richard L. Adams II, City Attorney John Mayer, Senior Planner Paul Garnett, Assoc. Planner Knarik Vizcarra, Planning Intern</p> <p>Comm. Morrish led the pledge of allegiance.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PUBLIC COMMENTS</b></p>	<p>John Lesak, Vice-Chair CHC, requested that the Commission consider placing an item on the agenda, which would mitigate the demolition of contributing garages in historic districts by waiving the requirement of two covered parking spaces as stated in the Zoning Code.</p> <p>Jeffrey Burke informed the public that he purchased the property at 5 Pasadena Avenue (formerly Gino's Restaurant) and that he is looking forward to transforming it into a small elegant dining restaurant. He also commented that the Ostrich Farm has great potential for development.</p> <p>Susan Masterman, Vice-Chair DRB, commented that at her last meeting it was discussed that the commissions and boards should decide on a pre-approved list of materials for windows and roofs to make decision making easier when it comes to approving projects. Ms. Masterman circulated a materials board among the Commissioners for approval.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PUBLIC HEARING</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></p> <p><b>555 Camino Verde (Hillside Development Permit/Design Review)</b></p> <p>Planning Intern, Knarik Vizcarra presented her staff report, regarding the approval for a Hillside Development Permit and Design Review for the demolition of an existing deck and the construction of a 585 square foot deck. Ms. Vizcarra reviewed the details of the project and pointed out the following: 1) the entire portion of the underpinnings will be covered with a wood lattice with landscaping growing up the lattice; 2) staff did not receive</p>

	<p>enquires for this project; and 3) the project met the required findings for a Hillside Development permit and Design Review. At the conclusion of her presentation, the Commission had questions for Ms. Vizcarra, regarding the following: 1) the dimensions and the visibility of the retaining wall and if there were landscaping plans. Ms. Vizcarra pointed out that the dimensions of the retaining wall were not included in the plans, because the wall will not be visible, since the wall will be underneath the deck and covered by the proposed lattice. She also pointed out that landscaping plans were not submitted, because the landscaping requirements were included in the conditions of approval.</p> <p>The applicant, Angela Leverett pointed out that the retaining wall is needed to support the deck; therefore, it will not be visible. New landscaping was not proposed because the applicant decided to work with the existing plants, and the type of planting selected to grow along the lattice will be submitted to the Planning Department.</p> <p>Chair Felice declared the public hearing open. Seeing that there were no speakers in favor of or in opposition to the item, he declared the public hearing closed.</p> <p>A motion was made by Comm. Friedman, seconded by Comm. Davis to approve the Design Review and the Hillside Development Permit, subject to the recommended conditions of approval for 555 Camino Verde.</p> <p>The motion carried 5-0. (Resolution 12-01)</p>
2	<p><b>543-547 Prospect Avenue (Tentative Parcel Map/Variance-Lot Line Adjustment)</b></p> <p>Senior Planner, John Mayer informed the Commission that the public was notified by staff that another variance is required for this project; therefore, this item will be re-noticed for the month of February. No Action Taken</p>
3	<p><b>191 Monterey Road (Hillside Development Permit/Conditional Use Permit/Tentative Tract Map/Design Review)</b></p> <p>Senior Planner, John Mayer presented his staff report regarding a Hillside Development Permit, Conditional Use Permit, Tentative Tract Map and Design Review for a 9 unit condominium complex at 191 Monterey Road. Mr. Mayer provided the Commission with a Power Point presentation reviewing the details of the project. Mr. Mayer pointed out that 16 trees on the property will need a tree removal permit and that three of them are oak trees leaning downslope with large canopies. The conditions of approval will note that 47 replacement trees will be needed. Mr. Mayer clarified that the Public Works director provides the final decision on tree removal and not the Natural Resources &amp; Environmental Commission (NREC) as implied in the staff report.</p>

The original project was presented to the Commission in September of 2010 but the Commission had concerns about the size, scale, grading and the design of the project. Tom Nott was selected as the new architect for the project; therefore, he submitted new plans. The size and scale are the same as the original project. Currently, Mr. Nott was able to reduce the grading of the project by 30%.

Mr. Nott was able to address the Commission's initial concerns, regarding the original project by making the following changes to the plans, 1) he replaced the concrete wall and landscaped planters with a sloping front yard, 2) a meandering driveway was included to provide access to a decorative cutout opening for parking; 3) projecting wall dormer and terraces were included to break up the scale and massing of the building; 4) additional architectural details were included, such as tiered cornices, decorative window surrounds and windows sills and 7) a supporting hillside wall was included. This project is zoned for Medium Density Residential and complies with the Development Standards for the Zoning Code, regarding setbacks, height limits and open space requirements. The project's Mediterranean design features Mission "S" style roof tiles, a smooth stucco finish, Mr. Mayer pointed out that staff recommends approval for the project.

At the Conclusion of his staff report, the Commission had questions for Mr. Mayer regarding the following: 1) the approval of a similar condominium project next door to the project; 2) were plans submitted for the same project for less than 9 units; and 3) why was the street light relocation omitted from the Conditions of Approval. Mr. Mayer also answered questions, regarding the grading for the project and was asked to give an example of another residential project, which had grading of the same magnitude as this project.

Mr. Mayer verified that a similar condominium project was previously approved next door to the current project. He also clarified that 1) plans for this project were submitted for 9 units "only"; 2) it was no longer needed to include the relocation of the street light in the conditions; and 3) the largest amount of grading for a single family residence was 4,096 cubic yards of dirt.

The applicant, Tom Nott summarized the details of the project and pointed out the following: 1) the front yard setback (26 feet) and the side yard setback (28 feet - privacy), 2) a meandering driveway was included in the design to raise the project as high as possible without significantly impacting the street elevation, 3) crib wall ( landscaping - vinca major). He also pointed out the 1) landscaping, 2) walls (Sand Float finish), 3) foam details, 4) Spanish style roof; 5) green space (before parking structure), and 6) Mediterranean landscape.

Comm. Morrish inquired about what recommendations were made as a result of the soils report. Chair Felice inquired if concave/convex tiles can

	<p>be used in lieu of “S” tiles for the roofing material, which would create a nice blend of dark and light.</p> <p>Chair Felice declared the public hearing open. 1) Betty Spaford, 201 Monterey Rd. expressed her concerns about noise, drainage, parking and traffic. Seeing that there were no other speakers in favor of or in opposition to the item, he declared the public hearing closed. Mr. Nott responded to Ms. Spaford’s concerns in the following manner; <u>Drainage</u>: a drainage system was designed for the project with 12 yard drains scattered along the site; 2) <u>Parking</u>: five guest parking spaces will be included along with a double garage; 3) <u>Noise</u>: the rooms are setback 20 ft. from property line and the double glazed windows will assist with noise reduction.</p> <p>Mr. George complemented Mr. Nott on his design and Mr. Davis said that the project should be approved on its current merit.</p> <p>After considering the staff report and draft resolution, a motion was made by Chair Felice, seconded by Comm. Davis to approve the application subject to changing the “S” shaped roof tiles to a more conventional two piece overlapping tile structure which would be true to the Mediterranean style of the project.</p> <p>Comm. George amended Chair Felice’s motion to include that staff should thoroughly review the recommendations of the soils report.</p> <p>The Commission discussed Comm. George’s amendment.</p> <p>Comm. George withdrew his amendment.</p> <p>The motion carried 5-0. (Resolution 12-02)</p>
4	<p><b>1215 Blair Avenue (Hillside Development Permit/Design Review – New Home)</b></p> <p>Senior Planner, John Mayer presented his staff report, regarding approval for the construction of a new Spanish Colonial Revival style home on a down slope lot located at 1215 Blair Avenue. Mr. Mayer reviewed the details of the project and pointed out the following: 1) the proposed house will have the appearance of a one story house below street level, which will protect the views on Blair Ave.; 2) the building will reduce the overall massing and bulk of the building; 3) the driveway will have an 11% slope where there is a two car garage with a parking space in front of it; and 4) a portion of the front yard will be graded with fill to provide the driveway and parking space. At the conclusion of his staff report, the Commission did not have questions for Mr. Mayer.</p> <p>The architect, Bradley pointed out that the Design Guidelines and the</p>

	<p>Hillside Development Standards were incorporated into the plans. Modulation along each one of the planes front rear and sides. He also commented that the house will fit in well with the area. The modulated roof will provide view protection.</p> <p>Comm. George verified with Mr. Bradley that the garage door will have dark vinyl made to look like wood. Decorative material similar to the rod iron and metal pieces as well on the door will be incorporated in the garage door.</p> <p>He answered questions regarding with arched window on the east elevation details, inset from the frame, color materials board "S" tile will be used</p> <p>Chair Felice commented that since the roof is going to be a prominent feature in this project it should be highlighted in a very artistic way.</p> <p>Chair Felice declared the public hearing open. Don Getman, 1241 Blair Ave., and David Riley, 1210 Blair Ave. expressed their concerns regarding the following: 1) driveway width, 2) large retaining walls, 3) house entrance, 4) side yard interface 5) existing tree maintenance; 6) interfacing with the large structure on St. Albans; 7) roof mounted equipment; and 8) parking.</p> <p>Mr. Bradley addressed the concerns of the neighbors as follows: 1) retaining walls were not proposed unless otherwise instructed by Public Works staff; 2) the house was oriented on the site as best as possible, 3) two additional parking spaces can be located in front of the garage.</p> <p>Chair Felice verified with Mr. Bradley that the structure (steps) on St. Albans will be removed. Mr. Bradley pointed out that any accessory structure other than the house will be removed from the project site. Landscaping plans were submitted and roof mounted equipment will not be installed. There will be no steps from Blair Avenue to the entrance. Guests will have to walk down a concrete paved (slip resistant) driveway and the large white wall will be demolished.</p> <p>Comm. George pointed out that the strength of this project is that the house is a one story structure for this downward sloping lot, which decreases the appearance of the massing for this project. The weakness of this project is that the high point of the house abuts the adjacent property directly to the north.</p> <p>Comm. Friedman and Comm. George inquired about having the applicant recess the front window to allow a shadow line for an attractive front elevation.</p> <p>Comm. George discussed the execution for the front window detailing with Mr. Bradley. Mr. Bradley decided that the window should speak for itself</p>
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	<p>with the arch at the top including a 90 degree recess as suggested by Comm. Friedman.</p> <p>After considering the staff report and draft resolution, a motion was made by Comm. George, seconded by Comm. Friedman to approve the project as submitted with the inclusion of the front arched window detail pushed back flush to the interior with a 4 9/16<sup>th</sup> jam and a 90 degree stucco profile.</p> <p>The motion carried 5-0. (Resolution 12-03)</p>
5	<p><b>1483 Indiana Avenue (Hillside Development Permit/Design Review – New Single Family Residence)</b></p> <p>Associate Planner Paul Garnett presented his staff report regarding approval for a Hillside Development permit, Design Review and a Negative Declaration for a new single-family residence at 1483 Indiana Avenue. Mr. Garnett reviewed the design and details for the project. He noted page 3 of the staff report, regarding the articulation of the downhill building walls. Per the Zoning Code, the walls should be “stepped in” to break up the downhill wall planes of the building. Since the roof planes, balcony planes, and wall planes are at angles to each other, there is not a consistent minimum 10-foot horizontal run; therefore; staff’s recommendation was to have the Commission review the articulation and the way that it is achieved. Mr. Garnett pointed out conditions 10, 11, 13, 14, 15 and 16, which relate to construction practices to avoid impacting Indiana Avenue and the Monterey Hills Elementary school on Via Del Rey.</p> <p>Mr. Garnett pointed out that this project met all the required findings for a Hillside Development Permit and Design Review. Staff recommended project approval and the adoption of the Negative Declaration. At the conclusion of his staff report, the Commission had questions for Mr. Garnett, regarding the possible use of a variance if the Commission came to the conclusion that the intent of the code was not met regarding the downhill building walls’ articulation.</p> <p>The applicant, Susan Masterman, presented the Commission with a colors board and a 3D model of the project via her computer. Ms. Masterman reviewed the details of her project. For reference, she provided the Commission with design images of similar projects (white walls, aluminum rails, and roll-up garage doors with frosted glass). Ms. Masterman pointed out the following: 1) there is a 28-foot height limitation parallel to the existing slope; therefore the building needs to be as close to the street as possible in order to provide the required 20-foot depth for the garage and parking space; 2) the house will have a smooth stucco finish, aluminum windows/doors, metal cable railing and porcelain tile; and 3) the landscaping will consist of California natives and succulents.</p>

	<p>Per Comm. Friedman’s request, Ms. Masterman, via her computerized model, indicated how the downhill building walls were articulated. Comm. George pointed out that modulation does not necessarily ensure good design.</p> <p>Chair Felice declared the public hearing open. Seeing that there were no speakers in favor of or in opposition to the project, he declared the public hearing closed.</p> <p>Comm. George inquired if it would be possible to reduce the pitch of the roof. Mr. Garnett responded that it would be possible but the building height would have to be reduced to 24-feet. Comm. George also inquired if the same leeway could be granted for height vs. roof pitch just like modulation vs. setback. Mr. Garnett commented that the comparisons are different; therefore staff would have to come back with a variance.</p> <p>Comm. George commented that the only flaw in the design is that the roof pitch opposes the slope and a better design solution could be utilized.</p> <p>The Commission continued discussion on the item, regarding design solutions for the wall height and roof pitch, such as a shed roof, higher doors /window or transom windows.</p> <p>Comm. Friedman commented that the intent of the code is met by the project design regarding the modulation of the downhill wall planes.</p> <p>After considering the staff report and draft resolution, a motion was made by Comm. George, seconded by Comm. Morrish to approve the Hillside Development permit and Design Review and to adopt the Negative Declaration for 1483 Indiana as submitted.</p> <p>The motion carried 5-0. (Resolution 12-04)</p>
6	<p><b>1933-1941 Mill Road (Planned Development Permit/Design Review/Tentative Tract Map)</b></p> <p>Associate Planner Paul Garnett presented his staff report regarding a Planned Development Permit (PDP) and a Tentative Tract Map for the purpose of subdividing the property to create five single-family lots, and Design Review for a proposed tandem garage. Mr. Garnett Reviewed the details of the project. Regarding the Planned Development Permit, Mr. Garnett pointed out that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) An applicant must meet one of the following criteria to use the PDP process: provide affordable housing, senior housing or a mixed use development (the applicants had chosen to provide affordable housing).</li> <li>2) PDP projects are expected to exhibit exemplary design. (The project</li> </ol>

	<p>provides “Green” elements, including energy and water conservation upgrades to two of the units, water-permeable paving, the removal of three septic tanks and certain fire safety upgrades to three units).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) The City has only received two other PDP applications (the Downtown Project and the Abbott Labs project).</li> <li>4) The project includes Design Review for a tandem garage.</li> </ol> <p>Staff noted that numerous inquiries had been received, which were mostly in opposition to the project, but this project would help the City meet its obligations for providing affordable housing. The project includes several layers of protection, such as 1) façade easements, 2) CC&amp;R’s and 3) covenants against the title of each dwelling to restrict future development.</p> <p>Staff suggested that the Commission should set a high bar as future PDP applications might be judged against this one. Staff recommended that the Commission approve the project as submitted and to adopt the Negative Declaration.</p> <p>At the conclusion of his presentation the Commission had questions for Mr. Garnett, regarding the following: 1) which unit will be designated for affordable housing (1939 located at the rear south/east corner of the property); 2) has a property analysis been done, regarding the going market rate for such units (no); 3) how many PDP applications have been submitted in the past (two); 4) what variances and Zoning Code Amendments would be needed for this project (principally reduction in the minimum lot size and some setbacks); 5) what are the triggers for affordable housing eligibility (senior housing etc.); 5) what is superior about the design of the project (the green factors); 6) How many legal non-conforming structures are in the city of South Pasadena; 7) what is the intent of the PDP; 8) why is this project considered to be of exemplary standard.</p> <p>Project architect John Lesak reviewed the details of the project and pointed out the changes and new additions that will be made to the project as follows: 1) a 25,000 sq. ft. lot will be subdivided into five individual lots ranging in size; 2) septic tanks will be removed; 3) the installation of fire sprinklers to the three rear units; 4) the removal of deteriorating pavement; 5) the installation of native or drought tolerant plants; 6) the removal of chain link fences; and 7) a “green” analysis would apply to the affordable unit and the one of the historic houses; 8) all of the residences must have two covered parking spaces; 9) the houses will be repainted; and 10) the walls of the proposed tandem garage will have a stucco finish. The intent is to make systematic improvements. For the green analysis, the homes must achieve minimum requirements in at least 5 categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) community, 2) energy, 3) materials, 4) resources and 5) water.</li> </ol> <p>Alan Lowy, the applicants’ lawyer, pointed out that he is trying to maintain</p>
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	<p>the status quo (no substantive changes to the existing property), and that the superior design for this project is the affordable housing unit that is created. To prevent a buyer from tearing down the house and building a higher density project, Mr. Lowy pointed out the following: 1) a zone change is not proposed; 2) the PDP creates single-family properties; 3) multiple acquisitions would have to be made, since the property will be subdivided into 5 lots; 4) affordable housing is designed to promote housing for the working class, such as teachers, secretaries etc... 5) energy efficient upgrades will be made to some of the units. Mr. Lowy proposed to record a covenant, which will protect the historical facades of some of the buildings.</p> <p>The Commission did not agree with Mr. Lowy's interpretation of superior design for the following reasons: 1) changing a single owner to multiple ownership will not protect against a higher density development and 2) the provision of affordable housing cannot be considered to be superior design.</p> <p>The Commission discussed energy audits and green points.</p> <p>Chair Felice declared the public hearing open. The following people spoke in favor of the item and pointed out the following: great opportunity - young professional ownership, exceptional design, historical community - preserved, community benefits, zoning will not change, the property is a "time capsule", maintain status quo, neighborhood compatibility, 1) Odom Stamps, 318 Fairview, 2) Glen Duncan, 2031 Berkshire, 3) Dolly Chapman, 1941 Fremont Ave.</p> <p>The following people spoke in opposition to the project and expressed their concerns regarding the following issues: the project was actually a condo conversion in disguise, the misuse of a Planned Development Permit, tandem garages, land use, common interest developments, substandard buildings, subdividing property, bad precedent set, the existing covenant on the property's title, decrease in property value, traffic, parking, possible accidents, subdivision (non-conforming lots), and the Planned Development Permit. 1) Cynthia Vargas, 720 Garfield Ave., 2) Rick Swanson, 1931 Mill Rd., 3) Olivia Galvin, 1947 Mill Rd., 4) Cassandra Johnson, 1910 Mill Rd., 5) Karen Weinstock, 727 Garfield Ave., 6) Walter Cervantes, 1921 Mill Rd., and 7) George Chavez, 1925 Mill Rd.</p> <p>Mr. Lowy commented that the project meets the requirement of the code, and that there will be tangible benefits, such as affordable housing and sewer, electric, water and green upgrades at no cost to the City.</p> <p>Chair Felice declared the public hearing closed.</p> <p>The Commission continued discussing the item and pointed out the following: 1) this item can create a precedent that a PDP can be used as a</p>
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means to circumvent issues that are required by the Zoning Code and the General Plan, 2) a PDP is not applicable to this project, 3) superior design does not mean the provision of affordable housing and it is not reflected in this project, 4) subdivision does not equate superior design, and 5) maintaining the status quo would be to maintain single ownership of the entire property.

Mr. Lowy asked to respond to the Commissioners comments. The Chair did not let him do so, since Mr. Lowy attempted to comment after the public portion of the hearing was closed and during the time when discussion is open to the Commissioners only.

After considering the staff report and draft resolution, a motion was made by Comm. Davis, seconded by Comm. Morrish to deny the Planned Development Permit, the Tentative Tract Map, Design Review and deny the adoption of the Negative Declaration.

City Attorney Adams pointed out that since the Commission chose to deny the project, findings to substantiate the denial should be made by the Commission. Mr. Adams pointed out page 10 c. - "The approved modifications to the development standards of this Zoning Code are necessary and appropriate to accommodate the superior design of the proposed project, its compatibility with adjacent land uses, and its successful mitigation of environmental impacts." **The finding could not be made.**

Page 9 a. "The project is consistent with the actions, goals, objectives, policies and programs of the General Plan and any applicable specific plan, and allowed within the applicable zoning district." **The finding could not be made.**

Comm. Friedman pointed out that there is a threshold issue regarding whether this project qualifies as a Planned Development Permit project.

Mr. Watkins directed the Commission to go through all items to make their findings of denial and next month staff would present a final resolution to the Commission for approval.

Comm. George added page 10 f. - "The Planning concepts and design features of the project are reasonably suited to the characteristics of the site and the surrounding neighborhood." **The finding could not be made.**

Comm. George added page 10 g. - "The location, size, planning concepts, design features, and operating characteristics of the project are and will be compatible with the character of the site, and the land uses and development intended for the surrounding neighborhood by the General Plan." **The finding could not be made.**

		<p>Comm. Davis amended his motion, seconded by Comm. Morrish to include letters a, c, f and g were the findings, which could not be made by the Commission.</p> <p>The motion carried 5-0.</p>
<b>NEW BUSINESS</b>	<b>7</b>	<p><b>Planning Commission Input – 2012-2013 Budget</b></p> <p>Mr. Watkins pointed out the following: 1) the Commission has the option to differ this item to the next Planning Commission meeting; and that 2) staff will present the Commission with this year's fiscal budget as a reference point for next year's budget at the next regularly scheduled meeting</p> <p>Mr. Chavez recommended that a fee study should be conducted to ensure that the City is collecting the appropriate amount of fees. Mr. Chavez would be willing to help with fiscal analysis.</p> <p>Mr. Watkins clarified that the City conducts a comprehensive fee study every four years; therefore, the current fees are 100% of the service.</p>
	<b>8</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the Planning Commission's December 5, 2011</b></p> <p>The minutes were approved as submitted by staff.</p>
	<b>9</b>	<p><b>Comments from City Council Liaison</b></p> <p>Robert S. Joe commented that he was appreciative that the Mayor appointed him as the PC liaison. He spoke about different items on the City Council agenda, such as the Ostrich Farm.</p>
	<b>10</b>	<p><b>Comments from Planning Commissioners</b></p> <p>Chair Felice welcomed Kristen Morrish and Evan Davis as the new the Planning Commissioners.</p>
	<b>11</b>	<p><b>Comments from Staff</b></p> <p>Mr. Watkins also welcomed the new commissioners and Roberts S. Joe as the new Council Liaison.</p> <p>Mr. Watkins pointed out the following: 1) an item will be presented to the City Council, regarding the inclusion of Mixed Use for the Ostrich Farm; 2) the Planning Commission agenda packet is available on line for iPad viewing; 3) staff would like to present the Commission with a memo to review the PDP portion of the code, for the purpose of initiating a Zoning Code amendment.</p>
<b>ADJOURNMENT</b>	<b>12</b>	<p>The meeting adjourned at 11:32 p.m. to the next meeting of the Planning Commission scheduled for February 27, 2012.</p>

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were adopted by the Planning Commission of the City of South Pasadena at a meeting held on February 27, 2012.

**AYES: DAVIS, FELICE, FRIEDMAN, GEORGE, MORRISH**  
**NOES: NONE**  
**ABSENT: NONE**  
**ABSTAIN: NONE**



Steven Friedman, Acting Chair



Anthony George, Secretary

**ATTEST:**



Elaine Serrano, Recording Secretary