



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2021 AT 6:30 P.M.

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

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Hill called the Regular Design Review Board meeting on Thursday, November 4, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was conducted as an in-person hybrid meeting from the Council Chambers, Amedee O. "Dick" Richards, Jr., located at 1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena and on Zoom.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Joe Carlson, Board Member
Mark Smeaton, Board Member
Melissa Hon Tsai, Vice-Chair
Samantha Hill, Chair

ABSENT:

Kay Younger, Board Member

COUNCIL LIAISON

PRESENT:

Diana Mahmud, Mayor, Council Liaison

STAFF

PRESENT:

Angelica Frausto-Lupo, Community Development
Director
Margaret Lin, Deputy Community Development
Director
Jeff Hamilton, Contract Planner
Elaine Serrano, Administrative Secretary

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Majority vote of the Board to proceed with Board business.

There were no changes requested and the Agenda was 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 HEARING

1. **Project No. 2283-DRX – Design Review for the demolition of a 340 square-foot carport, a 394 square-foot addition for a master suite, and a 250 square-foot attic space over the proposed addition of an existing 1,606 square-foot single-family home located at 2059 Empress Avenue (APN: 5319-016-010).**

Recommendation:

Approve, subject to conditions of approval.

Presentation:

Contract Planner Hamilton presented the staff report.

Vice-Chair Tsai asked if the front window really was a bay window since it appeared to be a floor-to-ceiling window in the renderings and if it counted towards square footage.

Contract Planner Hamilton stated it was not a bay window, but in fact a series of 4 side-by-side windows. Upon further review of the plans and specifically the new wall line, Mr. Hamilton stated that there appeared to be sixty additional square feet.

Board Member Carlson stated that staff had a recommendation about scale and height and asked if there was a specific target height.

Contract Planner Hamilton stated that there was no specific height recommendation and that staff just felt that the second-story addition was too tall and needed differentiation between floors. He suggested that a subcommittee could work with the applicant to determine the details.

Chair Hill stated that the agenda says that staff recommendation is to “approve as submitted” but that there seemed to be new conditions added.

Mr. Hamilton stated that the Board had all the same renderings as staff and that it was staff’s belief that if the Board was willing to form a subcommittee and work on the project with applicant, that the project would be close to being approved.

Public Comments:

None.

Applicant Presentation:

Applicant/Architect Janet Suen wanted to address questions from the Board. She stated that the second story addition, the attic, was intended to house memorabilia from a deceased parent of the owner. She added that the attic was the only way to provide sufficient storage and that they were only recommending a seven-foot ceiling space. She added they would be happy to work with a subcommittee to add more articulation.

Vice-Chair Tsai stated the drawings state that the attic space is six feet, not seven feet.

Ms. Suen responded that it is because the roof slopes and the average is seven feet and the lowest point is six feet.

Vice-Chair Tsai asked about the lack of windows in the new bedroom and the obscured glass on the window living room. She stated her concern was light.

Ms. Suen stated the bedroom backed up to the alley so not having windows was intentional but the new living room window brought in more light and that it was clear glass and they would fix the plans.

Board Member Smeaton asked the applicant if all of the windows were aluminum.

Ms. Suen stated that they are mostly iron windows but there is a mix of aluminum and vinyl windows as well. She added the owners would like to replace all the windows in time, budget allowing.

Board Member Carlson stated that the addition feels very tall because it is so narrow.

Ms. Suen stated she had been thinking about adding a false roofline to break up the height.

Chair Hill added that she felt the massing seemed out of place and asked the applicant if she considered building a basement instead of an attic.

Ms. Suen stated that they did not consider a basement since it is complicated and costly. She added that because it is an attic, it would not require stairs, and therefore allow for maximum living area.

Chair Hill stated that it is essentially a tower stuck on top of a bedroom and it looks unbalanced.

With no further questions for the Applicant, Chair Hill closed the Public Hearing and opened the Board Member Discussion.

Board Member Discussion:

Board-Member Tsai stated that she was concerned the addition was going to be dark. She stated that adding clerestory windows to the back of the house would add light and articulation.

Chair Hill stated that the tower is not celebrated on the outside.

Vice-Chair Tsai stated that lowering the tower would help the design.

Chair Hill stated that lowering the tower was a good idea, as would changing the structure.

Vice-Chair Tsai then suggested that the applicant consider a flat roof to lower the tower.

Chair Hill suggested changing/extending the roofline and that perhaps, a flat roof would help hide the tower. She added that the Board would probably have to create a subcommittee to work with the applicant and then return the findings to the Board.

There was a robust discussion among Board Members regarding choosing a date to continue the project.

Vice-Chair Tsai suggested that the Board summarize the key elements the applicant should focus on and then she could come back to the subcommittee with new ideas.

Board Member Smeaton suggested that the applicant look at the window fenestration on the new addition, bringing the plate heights down, integrating the existing roof system with the addition.

Chair Hill stated that the applicant should revisit the tower massing, window fenestration, type of windows, the rooflines by the bay window and tower as well as considering lowering or extending the roofline and finally, consider a flat roof.

Ms. Suen asked if they decided to change out all of the windows would vinyl windows be acceptable.

Board Member Smeaton stated that vinyl has come a long way and that he likes block frame vinyl windows.

Action and Motion:

MOTIONED BY BOARD VICE-CHAIR TSAI, SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER SMEATON, CARRIED 4-0, to form a subcommittee of two members based on staff recommendation and continue this agenda item to the January 6, 2022 Design Review Board Meeting.

The subcommittee would be Board Member Carlson and Vice-Chair Tsai.

CONSENT ITEMS

None

DISCUSSION ITEMS

None

ADMINISTRATION

2. Comments from City Council Liaison

Council Liaison Mayor Mahmud stated that there are no minutes for the prior meeting and staff should work on minutes. She added that the Board should start thinking about who should apply as a replacement for Board Member Smeaton since his term is ending.

3. Comments from Board Members

Board Member Smeaton stated that he encouraged the current Board to think about who in the profession or design world would be a good candidate.

4. Comments from Subcommittees

None

5. Comments from Staff

Director Frausto-Lupo introduced herself and stated that she looks forward to learning more about the process. She added that the City is working quickly to add staff and that current staff is working on large projects including the Housing Element Update, the General Plan, the Downtown Specific Plan, in addition to current projects and the backlog, including completing Board minutes. Director Frausto-Lupo thanked and complimented Ms. Lin for holding down the department for the past month. She added that regarding the Housing Element Update, staff is accepting written comments through December 6, 2021 and there is an opportunity to comment at next Tuesday's Planning Commission Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

6. Adjourn to the regular Design Review Board meeting scheduled for December 2, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

There being no further matters, Chair Hill adjourned the Design Review Board meeting at 7:51p.m.

APPROVED,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Samantha Hill', is written over a horizontal line.

Samantha Hill, Chair – Design Review Board

2/1/2024
Date