



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

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

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

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**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Nichols called the Regular Meeting of the Design Review Board to order on Thursday, November 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

**ABSENT:**

Kay Younger, Board Member

**COUNCIL LIAISON**

**PRESENT:**

Michael Cacciotti, Councilmember

**STAFF**

**PRESENT:**

Elizabeth Bar-El, Interim Deputy Director  
Dean Flores, Senior Planner  
Tatianna Marin, Acting Assistant Planner  
Lillian Estrada, 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.

Board Member Martin stated that he ran by the property at 516 Arroyo Drive regularly. Vice-Chair Tsai stated she was the applicant for 516 Arroyo Drive.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

None.

**CONSENT CALENDAR ITEM**

**2. Minutes from the Regular Meeting of 10/3/24**

The Consent Calendar item was approved as submitted.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

- 3. PROJECT NO. 2573-DRX-TRP** – A request for a Design Review Permit (DRX) for 584 square-foot first-floor addition, 32 square foot second floor addition, an 891 square foot basement and a 36 square foot covered porch for an existing 2,660 square-foot single-family dwelling located at 278 Camino Del Sol (APN: 5311-005-023) in the Altos de Monterey (AM) zone. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project qualifies for a 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:**

Acting Assistant Planner Tatianna Marin presented the staff report.

There were no questions for staff.

**Applicant Presentation:**

Applicant and Architect were present but did not have a presentation.

There were no questions for applicant.

**Public Comments:**

None.

**Board Member Discussion:**

Board Member Hill stated there was a difference in the renderings: one with and one without shutters and asked which was correct.

Applicant Carlin Wong stated they had decided to remove shutters.

Vice-Chair Tsai stated she liked the larger windows on the façade and the new porch entryway.

Board Member Hill stated she too liked the new entryway with the exception placement of the sill on the window left of the entry.

Board Member Martin stated he agreed that the placement of that sill appeared low.

**Action and Motion:**

MOTIONED BY VICE-CHAIR TSAI AND SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER MARTIN, CARRIED 4-0, to approve the project with the condition to remove shutters from drawings and raise sill height of window B on first floor.

4. **PROJECT NO. PLR24-0008/DRX24-0012** – A request for a Design Review Permit (DRX) for a 4 square-foot single-story addition, 334 second-story addition, the demolition of an existing detached garage and construction of a new 2-car attached garage at a single-family dwelling located at 516 Arroyo Drive (APN: 5317-042-014) in the Residential Estate (RE) zoning district. The application includes a Reasonable Accommodation request to locate the new attached garage in front of the residence instead of being located at least 10 feet behind the front façade of the home as required by Code. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project qualifies for a 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 Design Review (excluding the garage placement), Deny the Reasonable Accommodation Request for the proposed placement of the garage, and require a Design Review Board Chair Review for alternative design or location of the required parking, subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

**Presentation:**

Vice-Chair Tsai recused herself stating she was the applicant on this project.

Senior Planner, Dean Flores, presented the staff report.

**Applicant Presentation:**

Architect Melissa Tsai made a presentation.

Board Member Martin asked about the grading strategy at the garage.

Architect Tsai stated there will some grading and a slab foundation but it would not warrant building a retaining wall.

Board Member Hill asked for clarification about current access from the garage to the house.

Architect Tsai stated that currently it is not easy to get from garage to house.

**Public Comments:**

Homeowner, Melvin Kum, stated his wife and daughter have disabilities and this renovation, including an attached garage in front, is necessary.

Katherine Kum stated she lives with her dad and has a disability in her feet and stated that an attached garage would be helpful.

Stephanie Kum stated that the extended Kum family had lived in South Pasadena for many generations, that this renovation would enhance the neighborhood.

**Questions for Staff:**

Board Member Hill asked staff why they found the request for reasonable accommodations did not adhere in this case for the garage proposal. In addition, she asked if the City Attorney had reviewed their findings.

Senior Planner Flores stated that these were required findings from the City's Municipal Code for reasonable accommodation requests and that they had consulted the City Attorney on this project.

Board Member Hill stated she was CASp ADA certified and asked if this City Municipal Codes complied with Federal Codes.

Interim Deputy Director Elizabeth Bar-El stated that staff recommended the project with the exception of the garage placement based on the City's Municipal Code. She added that staff felt there were other solutions within the Code to accomplish what the applicant wanted, like building a carport in the same location as the proposed garage.

Board Member Hill stated that the required finding "d" was potentially not in line with federal law.

**Board Member Discussion:**

Board Member Martin stated he did not feel had enough information to make a discretionary decision about the garage or even a carport. He added that maybe there could be a setback study of the street of average setbacks to evaluate impact on neighborhood.

Chair Nichols stated he felt a carport was an inferior solution aesthetically to an attached garage. He added that the house could use more windows.

Board member Hill stated she felt that functionality of the garage was very important and that she preferred a garage to a carport as well. She added that she liked overall design of house and materials on facade.

Board Member Martin stated that the Commission do due diligence for the record and the community by having the applicant present a site plan comparing the garage to a carport options in addition to a setback study.

Chair Nichols added they should finish a conversation about all of the architectural comments they have.

A detailed robust conversation ensued regarding materials, windows and roofline tweaks.

**Action and Motion:**

MOTIONED BY BOARD MEMBER MARTIN AND SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER HILL, CARRIED 3-0, to continue this item to the December 5, 2024 Design Review Board Meeting, to address redesign considerations, have applicant provide front setback study, have the applicant provide a carport design option, and have the City Attorney consult on this item.

Vice-Chair Tsai rejoined the meeting.

<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>
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**5. Comments from City Council Liaison**

Council Member Michael Cacciotti gave an update from the previous evening's City Council meeting. He stated that the City Council just approved two Mills Act Contracts despite opposition from one member of the public. He added that the City Council approved an exclusive negotiating agreement with a developer to create senior affordable housing at 1507 El Centro. He added that the theatre was aware of this and that they had a month-to-month lease with the City.

**6. Comments from Board Members**

None.

**7. Comments from Subcommittees**

None.

**8. Comments from Staff**

Interim Deputy Director Bar-El stated that Council directed staff to look into whether or not to keep the Design Review Board and that a change would require a change in the zoning code. She added that this would be brought to the City Council Meeting of December 18, 2024 for a discussion.

**ADJOURNMENT**

9. **Adjourn to the Regular Design Review Board meeting scheduled for December 5, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.**

There being no further matters, Chair Nichols adjourned the Regular Design Review Board meeting at 8:03 p.m.

APPROVED,

  
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Brian Nichols, Chair – Design Review Board

12-5-24  
Date