



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 1, 2023 AT 6:30 P.M.**

**CITY MANAGER'S CONFERENCE ROOM  
1414 MISSION STREET, SOUTH PASADENA, CA 91030**

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**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Brian Nichols called the Regular Meeting of the South Pasadena Design Review Board to order on Thursday, June 1, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was conducted as an in-person meeting from the City Manager's Conference Room located at 1414 Mission Street, South Pasadena, California.

**ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:**

Brian Nichols, Chair  
Melissa Hon Tsai, Vice-Chair  
Joe Carlson, Board Member  
Samantha Hill, Board Member  
Kay Younger, Board Member

**STAFF**

**PRESENT:**

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

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Majority vote of the Board to proceed with Board business.

Chair Nichols asked if Board Members or Staff had any changes to the Agenda. 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-parate contact for items on the agenda.

Board Member Younger stated that she drove past the 411 Alta Vista property.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

None.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

- 2. 411 Alta Vista Avenue (APN: 5311-011-053), Project No. 2542-DRX:** A request for a Design Review Permit (DRX) to add a 38 square-foot mudroom addition and a multi-level deck totaling 1,732 square-feet attached to the rear of an existing 2-story single-family dwelling at 411 Alta Vista Avenue (APN: 5311-011-053). In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under Section 15301, Class 1 (Existing Facilities).

**Recommendation:**

Find the project exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15301. Approve the project, subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

**Presentation:**

Assistant Planner Goldberg presented the staff report. Architect Susan Masterman also made a presentation. Homeowner Hector Rodriguez spoke briefly but did not have a presentation.

Board Member Carlson stated asked which materials were being used in the construction of the deck.

Ms. Masterman stated that they be using epay decking, a natural material, with thin metal wire for the guardrails which are meant to disappear and not become an element per se. She added that above the deck, there will be pasteel plaid posts to get to an 8-inch square and with a smaller six foot by six foot pergola above.

Board Member Carlson asked how it would all be anchored.

Ms. Masterman stated that it would be clad or wrapped.

Board Member Younger said she did not have a question but just wanted to state that the design was beautiful.

Chair Nichols stated he had a minor question about the side elevation. He asked if the deck's slight slope was for drainage.

Ms. Masterman stated it was sloped for drainage purposes.

Chair Nichols further asked if water was not able to pass through the deck material.

Ms. Masterman responded that the deck was spaced and not completely solid but they still did the slope for drainage purposes.

**Public Comments:**

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

**Board Member Discussion:**

Vice-Chair Tsai stated she felt the project was well done.

Board Member Carlson asked the applicant if they had to relocate the air conditioner compressor.

Ms. Masterman responded that she was not sure.

Board Member Hill said she agreed that the project was really well done. She added that she loved that there was access between the two decks.

Vice-Chair Tsai said the project was clearly a huge investment and particularly the staircase along the side. She stated that she felt this was money well spent.

**Action and Motion:**

MOTIONED BY BOARD MEMBER HILL AND SECONDED BY VICE-CHAIR TSAI, CARRIED 5-0, to approve the project with conditions of approval.

3. **333 Hawthorne Street (APN: 5313-017-014), Project No. 2551-DRX:** A request for a Design Review Permit (DRX) to add a 749 square-foot addition to the rear of an existing, one-story 770 square-foot single-family residence located at 333 Hawthorne Street (Assessor's Parcel Number: 5313-017-014). In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under Section 15301, Class 1 (Existing Facilities).

**Recommendation:**

Find the project exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15301. Approve the project, subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

**Presentation:**

Assistant Planner Goldberg presented the staff report. She stated that the applicant did not have a presentation but was available on Zoom.

With no questions from the Board, Chair Nichols asked for Public Comments.

**Public Comments:**

Administrative Secretary Estrada stated there were two public comments.

The first comment came from Luis De La Rosa. He stated the project was on a very narrow street with one lane and he was concerned since this appeared to be a major construction project. He asked if there was any guarantee that the street was going to remain open. He also expressed concern about dust and noise and asked how long the project would take to be completed.

Architect Leo Chuang responded that regarding the first question, the property has a long driveway for the contractors to park all of their trucks. He concurred that the street and alleyway were narrow. He added that the addition is not very large even though it looks large in the drawing. He stated that the house is only about 770 square feet. He stated that he was not a contractor but estimated that construction would last six to eight months without any hurdles. Regarding the question about dust, Mr. Chuang stated that the Public Works Department has a requirement in the building code that construction sites are required to provide dust mitigation. He added that what this means is that any part of the project that disturbs the soil must be watered down.

The second comment was from Chris at 329 Hawthorne Street who stated he was a professional writer working from home and the project house is six feet from his bedroom and office window. He stated this would have financial consequences to him.

Mr. Chuang responded that he would let the owners of the property know about his concerns. He stated that they would be moving into the property once it is done so they definitely will want to make sure that their neighbors are comfortable with the project. Mr. Chuang said that he would tell the owners to give him a schedule and at least 30-60 day notice before they started the project. He added that the resident could reach out to him as well.

Mr. De La Rosa asked if the City had certain hours when construction was allowed.

Assistant Planner Goldberg responded that the City does limit construction hours to 8:00AM to 7:00PM Monday to Friday, 9:00AM to 7:00PM Saturday, and 10:00AM to 6:00PM Sunday. She added that if this project were approved, it would come with eight pages of conditions.

Mr. Chuang stated that contractors generally only work until 4:00PM on weekdays and not always on the weekend. He added that if they did work on a Saturday it would be to finish what they did not finish during the week and would be minimal. He added that they generally did not work Sundays even though South Pasadena allows it.

With no more speakers, the public comments portion of the hearing was closed.

**Board Member Discussion:**

Board Member Carlson stated it looks like a substantial addition on paper but that is was actually not very large.

Board Member Hill commented that the addition was isolated to rear of house. She added that she has a neighbor under construction currently with a much larger project. She continued by saying that she works from home, and her office is directly next to the construction and it has not been a disturbance. Board Member Hill commented that in her experience it is dependent on the contractor. She added that a good contractor mitigates noise and that there may be a few impactful days but it is not the full six to eight months.

Vice-Chair Tsai stated that her neighbor on the west side built a 5,000 square-foot home right outside her office window and she was able to work from home for the whole year. She added that there was only one week of real noise, when they were grading the entire site. Vice-Chair Tsai commented that the City rules about dust mitigation were very strict. She commented that she understood the neighbor's concern.

Board Member Hill addressed the resident who had noise and dust concerns and stated that she recommended that he ask the homeowner or contractor to see the schedule to know when it will be impactful. She added that in her experience it is not disruptive the entire time.

Chair Nichols commented that it is less impactful once they close in the house. He then added it is good they have the driveway to park the trucks and that if there was ever trucks blocking the street, someone could call the City.

Board Member Carlson added that if the street is very narrow so it is good that the trucks would park in the driveway. He added that he is sure additional workers would park somewhere on the site.

Mr. De La Rosa added that traffic was main concern because there are several apartment buildings with cars going in and out and there are blind turns, a single-lane alley and a train. He suggested that the applicant might need to create a traffic control report.

Board Member Carlson suggested that the resident interact with the contractor with any concerns and report if any of the crew are not following the rules.

Planning Manager Chang added that one of the conditions from Public Works is that if a street needs to be closed, a traffic control plan must be provided to Public Works Department for review and a 48-hour notice must be given to residents.

Vice-Chair Tsai stated that, to continue the discussion, she really liked the addition. She added that she appreciated how the architect mimicked the original windows

from the front around the house and did away with the weird square windows. She also commented that the view from the street is improved.

Board Member Hill concurred that the scale is appropriate and it will be a great improvement.

Chair Nichols stated that he appreciated that this addition kept with the scale of the house.

**Action and Motion:**

MOTIONED BY BOARD MEMBER YOUNGER AND SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER HILL, CARRIED 5-0, to approve the project based on staff recommendation with conditions of approval.

**ADMINISTRATION**

**4. Comments from City Council Liaison**

None.

**6. Comments from Board Members**

None.

**7. Comments from Subcommittees**

None.

**8. Comments from Staff**

Planning Manager Chang reminded the Board that the Commission Congress was on 6/28 at the War Memorial Building and encouraged them to attend. He added that City Council had approved the Housing Element this past Tuesday. He further stated that the City would now be focusing on the General Plan Update and the Downtown Specific Plan. He also encouraged the Board to attend the General Plan Update Community Meeting on Saturday, June 3, at the War Memorial Building from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM. He added that the City would be bringing back the original General Plan consultant.

Chair Nichols stated he still owed Planning Manager Chang a blurb for the Commission Congress about the Board's achievements and work plan and asked if he was required to read it at the Commission Congress.

Board Member Hill responded that yes, he would have to read the blurb but that it is brief.

Chair Nichols stated that he would not be able to attend the upcoming General Plan Meeting and asked if there would be more meetings.

Planning Manager Chang stated that yes, there were two meetings planned: one this Saturday, June 3 and one on June 17. The meetings would be held at the War Memorial Building from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM.


**ADJOURNMENT**

**9. Adjourn to the regular Design Review Board meeting scheduled for August 3, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.**

There being no further matters, Chair Nichols adjourned the Design Review Board meeting at 7:23 PM.

APPROVED,

  
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Brian Nichols, Chair – Design Review Board

  
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Date