

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION  
CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA, CALIFORNIA  
CONVENED THIS 18<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF MAY, 2017  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 1424 MISSION STREET**

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ROLL CALL

The Meeting convened at: 6:50 PM

Commissioners Present: Deborah Howell-Ardila (Chair), Mark Gallatin (Vice-Chair), Steven Friedman, and Rebecca Thompson

Commissioners Absent: None

Council Liaison Present: Robert S. Joe, Councilmember

Staff Liaison Present: John Mayer, Senior Planner

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NON-AGENDA  
PUBLIC COMMENT  
PERIOD

1. None.
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CONTINUED  
APPLICATIONS

2. **2021 Le Droit Drive**  
**Applicant: Tom Nott, Architect**  
**Project No.: COA-1976**  
**Historic Status Code: 5D1**

**Project Description:**

A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for adding an 869 square foot second story addition to an existing 1,516 square foot single-story Spanish Colonial Revival house. The new floor addition will be located behind the roof ridge of the existing single-story front volume to minimize its massing impact on the historic façade. All exterior finishes are to match the existing house including wood windows, stucco walls and tile roofing. The house was constructed in 1923, has an historic rating of 5D1, and is located on a 7,500 square foot parcel.

This applicant did not submit any new materials for review; this item was continued to the June 15, 2017 meeting.

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3. **2073 Milan Avenue**  
**Applicant: Mr. Xiao Qin Liu**  
**Project No.: COA-1991**  
**Historic Status Code: 5D1**

Commissioner Gallatin recused himself and left the room when this item was called.

**Project Description:**

A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a 488 sq. ft. single story addition to a 1,632 sq. ft. English Revival house on an 8,560 sq. ft. lot. The addition will consist of a new master bedroom with a master bathroom, a laundry room and expanding the kitchen. The exterior materials will consist of stucco to match the existing, asphalt roof shingles, and vinyl windows for the addition.

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**Presentation:**

Xiao Liu (property owner) presented his project and responded to questions about the existing windows and whether the applicant could offset the addition from the original house.

**Public Comment:**

None

**Commission Discussion/Decision:**

Commissioners discussed the roof plan and concerns with potential drainage issues. Commissioners also discussed the contemporary appearance of the windows.

Motion/Second (Thompson/Friedman) to **APPROVE** the project with the **CONDITION** that the northern wall of the addition be stepped in up to two feet (minimum 1 foot) in order to show differentiation between the original house and the addition.

This motion was made on the following findings: the addition provides a clear distinction between the new and historic elements; the project adds substantial new living space while preserving the single story character of the streetscape; and the project nicely enhances the appearance of the residence without obliterating its original design, character, or heritage.

The motion carried 3-0, Gallatin abstained.

Upon consideration of the criteria identified in Section 2.64(b)(2) of the South Pasadena Municipal Code, Section 36.410.040 (required findings to approve the design review application, consideration of the application, and all written and oral testimony submitted, including the evaluation of the property by a qualified architectural historian and categorization of the property as set forth in the City's Cultural Heritage Inventory, the Cultural Heritage Commission found and determined that 2073 Milan Avenue as it exists, and as it is proposed to be altered, would reasonably meet national, state or local criteria for designation as a landmark or part of an historic district, and is exempt from CEQA under Class 31.

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NEW ITEMS

4. **1959 Marengo Ave**  
**Applicant: Michael Verdugo, Architect**  
**Project No.: COA-1903**  
**Historic Status Code: 5D1**

Commissioner Gallatin returned to the meeting when this item was called.

**Project Description:**

A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to add 242 square feet to an existing first floor and 161 square feet to the existing 2nd floor of an a Craftsman style house. The additions would occur towards the rear side of the house. The project also involves the conversion of an existing rear yard accessory structure into a pool house cabana. The pool house cabana

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would retain the foot print, location, and floor area of approximately 320 square feet. All roofing planes and finishes would match the existing.

**Presentation:**

Michael Verdugo (project architect) presented his project and responded to Commissioners' comments about the plot plan (sheet C1), the lot size (7,500 s.f.), discrepancies with the location of door openings between the floor plans and elevations, and questions about the proposed doors and windows. Mr. Verdugo also responded to comments about the proposed design, drafting issues with the plans, and the current use of the accessory structure.

Mr. Verdugo confirmed that the window schedule was incorrect regarding the vinyl windows. Original double hung sash windows that were found on the property will be used for this project.

**Public Comment:**

None

**Commission Discussion/Decision:**

Commissioners agreed that clearer drawings were needed in order to make a well informed decision about the proposed design. There were concerns about the elongated look of the addition and its roofline and a need to differentiate the new addition from the original structure.

Motion/Second (Gallatin/Thompson) to **CONTINUE** the project so that the applicant can return with the following: 1) a clearer site plan and floor plan explaining what is existing, what is being demolished, and what is proposed; 2) items that relate to each other on each sheet of the drawings must be in alignment; 3) manage the notes with appropriate labeling (i.e. label the paint key); and 4) update the window and door schedule to indicate that recycled windows will be used.

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**5. 950 Mission Street**

**Applicant: Diane Staples**

**Project No.: COA-2001**

**Historic Status Code: 1D**

**Project Description:**

A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for an A-frame sidewalk sign. The proposed A-frame sign will be made of a dark color wood. It will have a black chalk board on both sides. The proposed dimensions are: 3' in height and 30" in width.

**Presentation:**

Diane Staples (applicant) presented her project.

**Public Comment:**

None.

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**Commission Decision:**

Motion/Second (Gallatin/Howell-Ardila) to **APPROVE** the project as submitted.

The motion carried 4-0.

This motion was made on the findings that the sign complies with the standards and design guidelines of the Mission Street Specific Plan and the project is exempt from CEQA under Class 31.

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**6. 203 Cedar Crest & 204 Mockingbird Lane**  
**Applicant: Elizabeth Herron/Cheryl Yada**  
**Project No. 1796-DRX-HDP-CUP-COA**

**Project Description:**

A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to modify a historic stone wall which is in connection with plans to build a new 2,475 square foot residential duplex.

Mr. Mayer provided background information about this project. The Planning Commission previously approved the duplex; however, the environmental assessment did not take into account the impacts to cultural resources which include an arroyo stone wall and a pedestrian tunnel that is believed to be under the surface of the site. Information about the potential impacts was presented to the Cultural Heritage Commission last November; however, the information was either vague or incomplete. Tonight, the applicant is presenting a revised schematic grading plan, drainage plan, site plan, and details about the stone wall cut at the driveway. The revised plans include protection measures that will protect the wall. The applicant has also submitted a report from a consultant (ASM Affiliates) to explain that the project will not affect the old pedestrian tunnel.

**Presentation:**

Elizabeth Herron (architect) presented an overview of the project. She said that her surveyor was able to map the location of the tunnel and they confirmed with a structural engineer that the tunnel is very deep and well below the footings of the project. She explained the difficulties of finding the tunnel's opening since it was capped and inaccessible with the development of apartments in the area. Ms. Herron explained the steps that will be taken to protect the stone wall including: initial Planning staff inspection of the wall opening marked, establishment of protective fencing along the upper slope parallel to the wall, construction staging and traffic concentrated on the Cedar Crest side, hand digging near the wall, signage on the inside of the fencing alerting construction crew to stay clear of the wall. She also noted that the catch basins will relieve hydrostatic pressure from the wall and the wall will be lit at night.

Jerry Crowley (civil engineer/land surveyor) distributed exhibits including old and current tract maps to illustrate how he was able to determine the location of the tunnel. Some of the notations on the maps indicated that

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the tunnel was to be filled. He also explained his estimation of the tunnel's distance below the surface based on the contours of the land.

Shannon Davis (Director, ASM Affiliates) and Sherry Andrews (Senior Archeologist, ASM Affiliates) spoke about their report and their search for evidence of the tunnel. Ms. Davis spoke about the Secretary of the Interior Standards and protection of the arroyo stone wall during and after construction. Ms. Andrews explained that there was nothing that could be examined from an archeological perspective.

Ms. Herron responded to a question from Commissioner Howell-Ardila and stated that she will be involved throughout the duration of the project.

Ms. Davis and Ms. Herron responded to a question about whether a planter would be added to the wall as shown in some historic photos of the Raymond Hotel.

Ms. Herron responded to questions about the distance between the wall and the proposed construction fence and the length of that fence. She also responded to questions about the design of the light fixtures and the drainage plan.

Mr. Mayer confirmed that Certificate of Occupancy will not be approved until the arroyo stone wall is rehabilitated and the mitigation measures are in place.

**Public Comment:**

Ron Calderon (232 Mockingbird Lane) was concerned that a large wall would be constructed, but is happy that is not included in the project and that the arroyo stone wall would be protected.

Norma Shroff, a neighboring condominium resident, spoke about her concerns with the protecting the arroyo stone wall. She observed another project in the vicinity where construction equipment is being placed on an historic wall and pieces of it appear to be missing. Ms. Shroff said that she is interested in the greenery that is proposed for the site.

Quyen Hoang (Owner of 249 Mockingbird) commented that it does not make sense to approve a protection plan for a wall that will be partially destroyed for a driveway opening. Mr. Hoang believes that the project should be redesigned in order to protect the entire wall and wants to know why it is not feasible. He also claimed that the assumptions regarding the pedestrian tunnel were made without sufficient facts; there is no evidence that the entire length of the tunnel was filled. Mr. Hoang claims that only the entrance was capped and filled and that the entire tunnel is hollow. He said that this raises public safety concerns. Mr. Hoang also noted that the project would be in violation of the tree ordinance.

Liz Herron spoke in rebuttal to Mr. Hoang's remarks. She was considering caissons so as not to surcharge the tunnel. However, a licensed soils and geotechnical expert analyzed the site with a licensed

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structural engineer who said that there is a sufficient layer of bedrock and no impact to the pedestrian tunnel. The grading and construction will also be monitored for any potential issues during construction.

Commissioner Howell-Ardila also noted that although it is not ideal to take out a piece of the historic wall, the consensus of the Commission has been that a re-design is not necessary because the applicant is cutting as little as possible and that a large extent of the wall will remain intact.

**Commission Decision:**

Motion/Second (Howell-Ardila/Friedman) to **APPROVE** the project including the mitigation plan and monitoring for the protection of the arroyo stone wall. The Commission also recommends an additional measure that requires an historic archeologist and/or a historic preservation professional will be available to do monitoring during work on the wall.

The motion carried 4-0.

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NEW BUSINESS

7. **1401 Via Del Rey (Conceptual Review)**

**Representative: Melissa Tsai**

**Description:**

The proposed project would involve a façade change of a recently determined historic mid-century modern home in Altos De Monterey neighborhood. The two-story house was constructed in 1971 and is noted for its architectural design features including its expressed post-and-beam construction, flat and low-pitched roof with wide overhangs, exterior wrap-around balcony, and decorative wood balcony railing.

**Presentation:**

Melissa Tsai presented the homeowners' proposal which includes two design options. One option (owners' preference) is to clad the existing brick masonry base with horizontal wood siding, and replace the current balcony railing with a modern cable railing system. Ms. Tsai said the proposed railing would meet building code requirements; whereas the current railing does not meet the requirements. The owners do not like the cement block element of the house and wish to soften its appearance with a redwood element. Ms. Tsai also presented an alternate design involves a modest update of maintaining the masonry, and replacing the balcony railing system with a matching design that is higher than what is existing in order to meet the current safety code. Ms. Tsai also noted that a lot of the wood needs to be removed due to termite damage.

The drawings did not show the change to the entire elevation; however, Commissioner Howell-Ardila said the change could look "overly institutional". It would be damaging to the house if all the historic material were removed. Commissioner Howell-Ardila also said that damaged wood must be patched and retained as much of the original historic material as possible.

Dillon Chang (property owner) said he is fine with preserving the home, but

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was under the impression that the Commission would work with him on a solution. He said that there would be a lot of shielding required for a long expanse of railing. It seems like the only option is a “baby cage” along the railing. He also said that the surface of the masonry features is harsh and wants to cover it with something nicer.

**Discussion:**

The Commission was not in favor of the proposed options. Commissioner Howell-Ardila said that this is a “signature property” noting that the proposed change to the railing would have a major effect on the design. In order to address the owners’ concerns about safety, Commissioners suggested a reversible, visually unobtrusive screen as an alternate to removal of the balustrades. Regarding the claims of termite damage, commissioners noted the importance of repairing the wood as a priority followed by replacing the damaged wood with in-kind materials. Commissioners also opposed any proposals that covers the slump block. The balustrade and slump block are important features of the home.

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**8. Historic Resources Survey and Inventory of Addresses Survey Update**

The Commission is reviewing the historic resources survey and inventory of addresses update that was prepared by the City’s consultant, Historic Resources Group (HRG). Commissioner Howell-Ardila noted that this item would be tabled until there is additional review of the properties that would be recommended for removal from the Inventory. However, she acknowledged that there were people in the audience who wanted to speak.

**Public Comment:**

Glen Duncan (2031 Berkshire) commented on the list of addresses that were recommended for removal from the Inventory and noted that the residents within the neighborhoods of those properties were not properly notified. He said that these stakeholders ought to know that they will be losing protections under the ordinance.

Mr. Mayer responded that staff is working with the consultant to ensure those properties would remain under the purview of the Cultural Heritage Commission by converting the evaluation ratings of 6Z to 6L.

Commissioner Howell-Ardila noted that the concern, from the preservation stakeholders’ perspective, is that properties that were qualifying historic resources under CEQA with status codes one through five are now being bumped down with an evaluation rating of 6Z and 6L which provides very little scrutiny under CEQA. Eligible historic districts should remain eligible historic districts. Removing these districts would mean no protection of neighborhoods that are largely intact.

Commissioner Friedman said that the concern about converting 6Z properties to 6L is that they would lose their designation as contributors to districts and this has a significant effect on the way the Commission reviews alterations. He also questions the basis upon which HRG’s recommendations are being made. Commissioner Friedman noted that a

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spot check of some properties appear to be mostly intact.

Mr. Duncan made some additional comments about the consultant's evaluation ratings including his home which was rated a 6Y. He is appalled that properties that were identified by Leslie Heumann and adopted by the City Council are now not eligible for historic preservation.

Commissioner Friedman noted that the methodology and criteria used in the survey seems aggressive in that it would force the Commission to deny any change that is proposed in the future in order for a property to retain historic integrity.

Commissioner Howell-Ardila explained the definition of 6L and the meaning of "special consideration in local planning". They are assigned to properties that share a development history but collectively lack the integrity needed to be a historic district.

Joan Hillard (534 Arroyo Drive) spoke about the reaction of people whose properties are being added to the inventory and that the public is not aware why their properties are being added. The community needs to know what the criteria was used to create the inventory and encourage citizens to be in favor of their properties being listed.

#### **Discussion**

Commissioners agreed that the consultant should not convert 6Zs to 6Ls because the preservation stakeholders are concerned about losing the CEQA protection of those properties. Reverting back to the codes that were originally assigned appear to be a solution. Commissioner Friedman suggested that a list of 30 properties that were recommended for de-listing be reviewed in the interim.

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#### **9. Cultural Heritage Ordinance**

The Commission is reviewing the latest draft of the new Cultural Heritage Ordinance. This item was continued so that the Commission's subcommittee can continue working with the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation on their comments and suggested edits. Mr. Mayer indicated that a subcommittee meeting is scheduled for next week.

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#### **10. Rialto Theater Subcommittee**

Staff pulled this item from the agenda.

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#### **COMMUNICATIONS**

#### **11. Comments from Council Liaison:**

Councilman Joe announced that Elaine Aguilar will be the Interim City Manager until a permanent replacement has been selected. The City's Budget for the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year will be going to Council next month and that finances are tight.

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**12. Comments from Commission**

None.

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**13. Comments from Staff**

None.

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MINUTES

**14. Minutes of the regular meeting of February 16, 2017**

Motion/Second (Gallatin/Howell-Ardila) to **APPROVE** the minutes as submitted.

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**15. Minutes of the regular meeting of March 16, 2017**

Motion/Second (Gallatin/Howell-Ardila) to **APPROVE** the minutes with minor edits.

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**16. Minutes of the regular meeting of March 16, 2017**

Motion/Second (Gallatin/Howell-Ardila) to **APPROVE** the minutes with minor edits

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ADJOURNMENT

**17. Meeting Adjourned at 9:21p.m. to the next regular meeting scheduled for June 15, 2017.**

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Deborah Howell-Ardila, Chair

8-17-17  
Date