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CITY OF SIERRA MADRE
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Regular Meeting of
Thursday, July 19, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 232 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Spears called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Spears, Commissioners, Catalano, Desai, Pevsner

Absent: Vice Chair Hutt, Commissioner Denison

Staff: Vincent Gonzalez, Director of Planning and Community Preservation
Jennifer Peterson, Administrative Analyst
Clare Lin, Assistant Planner
Theresa Highsmith, City Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Catalano moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Desai seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 5, 2018

Commissioner Frierman-Hunt moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Desai seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

None.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. DISCRETIONARY DEMOLITION PERMIT 17-06 (DDP 17-06); DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT 17-04 (DRP 17-04) AND SECOND UNIT PERMIT 18-04 (SUP 18-04)

Address: 62 E. Carter Avenue

Applicant: James Cadam

Commissioner Desai inquired about the calculation method of the front yard setback. Assistant Planner Lin provided the methodology.

48
49 Commissioner Frierman-Hunt inquired about the neighborhood size comparison chart.
50 Assistant Planner Lin stated that it had been provided by the applicant with some
51 direction from staff.
52
53 Commissioner Pevsner inquired about the net gain for RHNA.
54 City Attorney Highsmith stated it would be 1 unit.
55
56 Robert Morelli
57 Designer
58 Introduced James Cadam, the owner of the subject property.
59
60 Commissioner Frierman-Hunt inquired about the partial basement. The applicant
61 provided clarification on this design feature, which he stated is a very tall crawl space.
62
63 Chair Spears explained that the Commission is accustomed to more detailed drawings.
64
65 Commissioner Catalano noticed that the color renderings appear as though studio and
66 house will be painted or re-clad, and will be matching.
67 The applicant confirmed that that is the intention.
68
69 Commissioner Desai inquired about the placement of the garage. The applicant
70 explained the reasoning for how it is sited. Commissioner Desai and the applicant
71 discussed other options for the garage placement.
72
73 The Commission and the applicant discussed options for preserving the oak tree.
74
75 Commissioner Desai noted that the proposed 2nd unit is the Whalen house and
76 inquired about the applicant's intent to repair the foundation. The Commission and the
77 applicant discussed options for the foundation repair.
78
79 Commissioner Catalano suggested the use of the state historic building code.
80
81 The Commission inquired about the applicant's intent of use of property, if they intend to
82 be owner occupied.
83 The Owner stated that he would be developing the property for sale.
84
85 Chair Spears inquired if the applicant would be amenable to undergrounding all utilities.
86 The applicant stated he would.
87 Chair Spears requested that staff add that to the Conditions of approval.
88

89 **Public Comment**

90
91 Lisa Fowler
92 65 E. Mira Monte
93 Ms. Fowler spoke in favor of the project.
94

Discussion

95
96
97 Commissioner Frierman-Hunt felt that she would need more information to make a
98 decision. She voiced concerns with meeting Finding No. 8 – exceptional design
99 requirement. She stated that she feels that the Whalen Studio is an important building
100 and should be saved. She also voiced concerns about the height of house (need more
101 sections) and that the applicant should look at the median instead of the average size of
102 neighboring homes. Commissioner Frierman-Hunt also voiced concerns about the
103 preservation of the oak tree. She further stated that the arborist should have input
104 regarding the continued maintenance of the oak tree. It was also indicated that the
105 selection of the material pallet should have higher architectural detail—not sure of
106 exposed rafters and real stone should be used in lieu of cultured-stone. Also expressed
107 an interest to omit the swimming pool.
108
109 Commissioner Frierman-Hunt also spoke on behalf of Commissioner Hutt (absent)
110 citing concerns with the east and south building elevations; indicate how the pool would
111 be fenced, and stated that Commissioner Hutt has difficulty making Finding No. 8.
112
113 Commissioners Frierman-Hunt and Catalano felt that the color palette of the new
114 residence would be more interesting if it were treated with a natural wood finish similar
115 to the existing studio. Both expressed that the studio should not be painted but to keep
116 the natural finish and apply a transparent stain to protect the wood.
117
118 Commissioner Desai discussed design concerns with the applicant indicating that the
119 east building elevation is not resolved. The proportions of the (solid-to-void)
120 relationships are lacking on the east elevation.
121 He likes the courtyard layout of the residence, but the garage placement is of concern.
122 Consider removing the curb cut along the east elevation.
123 The south building elevation is also of concern. There appears to be a visual conflict
124 with the neighbor to the south. Consider the use of fencing or a hedge to address this
125 interface. Commissioner Desai stated that he would also have difficulty making Finding
126 No. 8. He encouraged the application to be creative, and to consider a courtyard
127 configuration. Commissioner Desai made program layout suggestions.
128
129 Commissioner Pevsner stated that he is in favor of the project and is glad someone
130 wants to preserve what is there and work with it.
131
132 Commissioner Catalano agreed with everyone's points, however stated that he had
133 difficulty making sustainable practices findings. Commissioner Catalano also stated
134 that he disagrees with historic resources report: Whalen is noteworthy locally. He
135 stated that he is not arguing with the potential historic designation, but feels that it is not
136 state or nationally significant. Expressed concerns with the east building elevation –
137 interior program needs to be reworked to achieve more transparency and to provide
138 more opportunities for animation. Expressed concern with the dark colored roof.
139
140 Chair Spears commended staff on the report and commended the applicant for their
141 sensitivity to the oak trees. He stated that he does not have any issue with the

142 demolition permit, as the existing structure is unstable. Chair Spears stated that he
143 wants more information on the safety aspect of the proposed rehabilitation and reuse.
144

145 The Commission agreed by consensus that they would like to see building
146 section/elevations to see how the proposed new construction relates to the house to the
147 south. Need a structural engineering report to determine how the foundation of the
148 original Whalen house will be restored; address solid-to-void relationships and introduce
149 more transparency/animation to the east building elevation; Consider omitting the
150 swimming pool (options: lap pool, plunge pool, hot tub), and underground utilities.
151

152 Chair Spears encouraged consideration of landscape solutions to mitigate the views of
153 the south building elevation and along Carter Avenue.

154 Mr. Cadam

155 Mr. Cadam stated that he is listening to the Commission and appreciates their input.
156

157 **Action: Commissioner Frierman-Hunt moved to continue this item to September**
158 **6, 2018, Commissioner Desai seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**
159

160 **Oral Communication**

161

162 **Audience**

163

164 None.

165

166 **Planning Commission**

167

168 Commissioner Frierman-Hunt stated that she will be absent at the October 4, 2018
169 meeting.

170

171 Commissioner Pevsner stated that he will be absent at the August 16, 2018 meeting.
172

172

173 **Staff**

174

175 Director Gonzalez stated that the next Planning Commission meeting will be held on
176 August 2, 2018.

177 He also stated that the joint City Council /Planning Commission study session has been
178 rescheduled to October 23, 2018.
179

179

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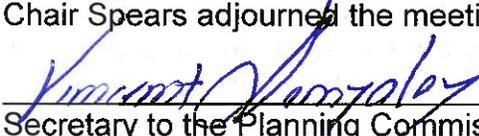
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183 Chair Spears adjourned the meeting at 8:50 pm

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185

186 
Secretary to the Planning Commission

187 Vincent Gonzalez, Director of Planning & Community Preservation