

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8

**CITY OF SIERRA MADRE
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

Thursday, January 18, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 232 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.

9
10
11
12

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Spears called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Spears, Vice Chair Hutt, Commissioners Catalano, Denison, Desai,
Frierman-Hunt, Pevsner

Staff: Vincent Gonzalez, Director of Planning and Community Preservation
Leticia Cardoso, Planning Manager
Jennifer Peterson, Administrative Analyst
Theresa Highsmith, City Attorney

21
22

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Denison moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Frierman-Hunt
seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

23
24
25
26
27

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 14, 2017

Commissioner Catalano moved to approve the minutes. Vice Chair Hutt seconded.
Motion carried unanimously.

28
29
30
31
32

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

None.

33
34
35
36

PUBLIC HEARING

37
38
39

**1. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 16-05 (CUP 16-05); DISCRETIONARY DEMOLITION
PERMIT 17-10 (DDP 17-10); CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS 17-02 (CA
17-02)**

Address: 94 N. Baldwin Avenue

40
41
42
43
44
45

Commissioner Frierman-Hunt stated that she has a working relationship with the art
gallery next door to the project site, however counsel has advised her that it is not a
conflict of interest. City Attorney Highsmith confirmed this.

46
47

Planning Manager Cardoso delivered the staff report.

48 The Commission discussed the procedure for consideration of the project. City Attorney
49 Highsmith recommended reviewing the project as a single item, rather than each
50 entitlement individually.

51
52 Commissioner Catalano stated that he disagrees with the historic local significance of
53 the project. He inquired if the Discretionary Demolition Permit depends on age or
54 historical significance. Director Gonzalez stated that if there is no architectural
55 significance the Discretionary Demolition permit will be dependent upon the historic
56 significance.

57
58 Commissioner Desai inquired about the height limit on the Green wall. Planning
59 Manager Cardoso stated that there is no height limit in the Commercial zone.

60
61 Wendy Te-Hui Liao
62 Applicant
63 Managing member of Ace Tea LLC
64 Ms. Liao provided the business model for her company as well as the qualifications of
65 the company's managing partners.
66 She also stated that the neighbor, Creative Arts Group, is supportive of their business.
67 Ms Liao stated that hers is a different concept from Four Seasons Tea Room; which will
68 complement their business.

69
70 Commissioner Hutt requested that she expand on the business model. He felt that the
71 description was more of a café than a tea room.
72 Ms. Liao stated that Ace Tea is not British style and formal. She stated that her
73 business would have different hours and would be more casual.

74
75 Commissioner Frierman-Hunt inquired as to the purpose of open deck in the rear and
76 front patio if seating is not allowed.
77 Ms. Liao stated that it is intended to be an open entry way and cyclist parking area.

78
79 Commissioner Hutt inquired if they intend to serve beer or wine in the future. Ms. Liao
80 stated that they will not.

81
82 Chair Spears inquired if the business is planning for walk in customers. Ms. Liao stated
83 that they were very much counting on that type of business.

84
85 Commissioner Desai inquired about employee parking. Ms. Liao stated that they had
86 not provided for it.

87
88 Tony George
89 Architect
90 Mr. George thanked the Commission for their service as he had previously sat as a
91 Planning Commission and Design Review member in South Pasadena. He stated also
92 that he was the architect for Wisteria Grill.
93 Mr. George spoke of the historic report determination and the likelihood that a historic
94 district could apply to the block in which the project site is located.

95 He stated that the potential for outdoor seating is prevented by the outdoor planter in
96 center of the patio. He stated that the front entry also doubles as an accessibility ramp
97 to the front door.

98
99 Commissioner Frierman-Hunt inquired why the front patio is covered. Mr. George
100 stated that is was intended for shade.

101
102 Vice Chair Hutt inquired why the Green wall is taller than canopy. Mr. George stated
103 that if the height of the wall is an issue, that he would like to come to agreement on the
104 height this evening. He also stated that he would prefer the project be approved with
105 conditions, as he would like to avoid a continuation. He stated that his client is
106 amenable to altering the height of the wall.

107
108 The Commission discussed the intent of the height of the wall and the use of the
109 awning. The applicant explained how the wall and awning design was conceived, and
110 how it contributes to the brand and overall aesthetic.

111
112 Commissioner Frierman-Hunt inquired about the purpose of the rear deck. Mr. George
113 explained that it was designed to protect the lower access from weather. He explained
114 that it also affords the ability to landscape and control the aesthetic from the interior of
115 the restaurant.

116
117 Kristen Naren
118 Creative Arts Group

119 Ms. Naren stated that Creative Arts is excited about this business. She stated that she
120 is concerned about wall blocking their business and affecting the aesthetic from our
121 perspective. She stated also that she believes that this wall will be on their property.

122
123 David Williams
124 Creative Arts Group

125 Mr. Williams stated that he believed that a portion of proposed building will be on their
126 property by a foot and a half. He stated that he too is concerned with the aesthetic as
127 viewed from Creative Arts.

128
129 Barbara Lee Cline
130 Resident

131 Ms. Cline stated that the Tea room sounds nice. She was concerned with the height of
132 the Green wall and the property line discrepancy.

133
134 Tony George
135 Architect

136 Mr. George would like to respond to concerns -
137 He stated that his client is willing to obtain a property line survey. He stated also that
138 they will lower the height of wall and offered to work with the Creative Arts Group.

139
140 **Discussion**

141

142 Commissioner Desai felt that it is a highly manicured front area, for just 'access'. He felt
143 that it would be great if there could be outdoor seating. He stated that he understands
144 the parking requirement, but thinks that the front area would be ideal for seating, as the
145 building is set so far back from the street.

146
147 Commissioner Catalano spoke about the historical significance of the property. He
148 stated that it is evaluated by two attributes- significance & integrity. He stated that the
149 report stated that the building has been altered. He felt that there is nothing about
150 setting, feeling, or association that provides evidence that it could potentially be a
151 contributor to a historic district.

152 Vice Chair Hutt doubted the viability of a potential historic district. He added that the
153 historic significance is easily commemorated by a plaque. Commissioner Catalano
154 agreed.

155
156 The Commission engaged in a discussion regarding the procedure for the entitlements.
157 City Attorney Highsmith provided direction and options.

158
159 The Commission agreed by consensus to request that the applicant commemorate the
160 historic significance by a plaque at the property.

161
162 The Commission discussed options for the Green Wall, awning and the option of
163 seating in the front area.

164 The applicant offered to lower the height of the Green Wall, and reduce the width of the
165 awning.

166
167 The Commission acknowledged the challenge of providing adequate parking in the
168 downtown area.

169 City Attorney Highsmith reminded the Commission that they cannot waive the
170 requirement; that would be out of conformance with the Municipal Code. She stated
171 that it could be understood that the Commission is O.K. with the later pursuit of seating
172 in front area and on the deck, at which time, a future code revision may provide for that.

173
174 Commission agreed by consensus to condition a reduction in the size of the awning, a
175 reduction in the height of the Green Wall, with the addition of a condition of continued
176 maintenance, to conditionally require the historic plaque, and the reduction of the height
177 of beams on south side, and to strike the parking condition.

178
179 **Motion: Commissioner Frierman-Hunt moved to approve Conditional Use Permit**
180 **16-05, and Discretionary Demolition Permit 17-10. She acknowledged that the**
181 **Commission did not find that the structure was eligible for historic designation**
182 **and that a Certificate of Appropriateness was not required for this project.**

183
184 **ORAL COMMUNICATION**

185
186 **Audience**

187 None

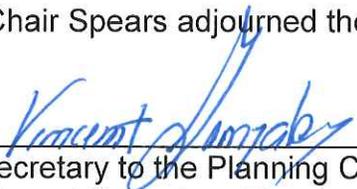
188

189 **Planning Commission**
190 None.

191
192 **Planning & Community Preservation Staff**

193
194 Director Gonzalez stated that the City Council will consider the Nonconforming Uses
195 Ordinance Amendments at their February 27, 2018 meeting.
196 He also stated that at this time, there are no projects for the February 1, 2018 Planning
197 Commission meeting, but that staff will work with Chair Spears on potential discussion
198 items.

199
200
201 Chair Spears adjourned the Planning Commission meeting at 9:40 p.m

202
203 
204 _____
205 Secretary to the Planning Commission
206 Vincent Gonzalez, Director of Planning & Community Preservation

