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**CITY OF SIERRA MADRE  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
Regular Meeting of  
Thursday, October 4, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.  
City Council Chambers, 232 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

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Chair Hutt called the meeting to order at 7:13 pm

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**ROLL CALL**

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17

**Present:** Chair Hutt, Vice Chair Denison, Commissioners Catalano, Desai, Spears,  
Pevsner

18  
19

**Absent:** Commissioners Frierman-Hunt,

20  
21

**Staff:** Vincent Gonzalez, Director of Planning and Community Preservation  
Jennifer Peterson, Administrative Analyst  
Terri Highsmith, City Attorney

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23

**REPORT OUT FROM CLOSED SESSION**

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City Attorney Highsmith reported out from closed session that no action had been taken

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**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 20, 2018**

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Commissioner Denison moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Desai  
seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

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**AUDIENCE COMMENTS**

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Deb Sheridan  
Valley Vista Dr.

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Ms. Sheridan thanked the Commission for their volunteerism. She also invited the  
Commission to the annual Preserve Sierra Madre BBQ.

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**PUBLIC HEARING**

45 **1. HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT 12-02 (HDP 12-02) AND CONDITIONAL USE**  
46 **PERMIT 12-09 (CUP 12-09)**  
47 **630 Baldwin Court (Lot 22)**  
48 **Applicant: CETT**

49  
50 Director Gonzalez delivered the Staff Report.

51  
52 Everardo Garcia  
53 LCRA Architects

54 Mr. Garcia delivered a Power Point presentation. He also read a statement from the  
55 landscape architect.

56  
57 Chair Spears inquired of staff if the applicant had received the Conditions of Approval.  
58 Director Gonzalez stated that they had. Chair Spears inquires if then the applicant is  
59 aware of the grey water requirements. Director Gonzalez confirms that they are aware.

60  
61 Commissioner Catalano expressed concern about the proposed hardscape under the  
62 dripline of the Sycamore tree. He inquired if the applicant would commit to installing  
63 permeable pavers. The applicant stated that he would be. Commissioner Catalano  
64 also expressed concern about that and the amount of planting under the Sycamore.  
65 Commissioner Catalano inquired about the color of the proposed retaining wall at the  
66 north side of the property. The applicant stated that it would match the color of the  
67 architecture stucco.

68  
69 **Public Comment**

70  
71 Marguerite Schuster  
72 Mt. Wilson Trail

73 Ms. Schuster encouraged the Commission to consider and minimize the impact of the  
74 development on the community and the ethos of Sierra Madre. She also expressed  
75 concerns about the arborist report, and preservation of the trees.

76  
77 Craig Harmon  
78 650 Baldwin Ct.

79 Mr. Harmon pointed out inefficiencies in the arborist report. He also expressed  
80 concerns about protecting the Sycamore trees from heavy equipment needed to  
81 excavate the basement.

82  
83 The applicant stated that they will have the arborist take another look.

84  
85 **Discussion**

86  
87 Commissioner Desai felt that the asymmetry of the gabled rooflines at the west and  
88 south building elevations do not mean contemporary. He stated that he would prefer a  
89 symmetrical design. He also felt that the long slope of the west facing roofline does not  
90 work, and suggested that the applicant consider a shallow slope, or more broken

91 dynamic. Commissioner Desai felt that overall, it is a strong approach and design style  
92 but would like to see more attention to detail to the building elevations.

93  
94 Commissioner Catalano concurred with Commissioner Desai's remarks. He also  
95 expressed concern about the dark roof color—which minimizes energy efficiency.  
96 Commissioner Catalano also concurred with Mr. Harmon's concerns about the trees.

97  
98 Vice Chair Denison concurred on the west facing roofline, and felt that the garage was  
99 not set in enough from the front entry.

100 Vice Chair Denison pointed out that the proposed stone facade wrapping the corner is  
101 almost exactly the diagram of what not to do in the Design Guidelines.

102 He also felt that the eclectic nature of the home's symmetry appears out of balance.

103 Vice Chair Denison pointed out that the windows on the Master bath/BD/BA2 seemed  
104 offset and out of proportion. He also pointed out that the Air Conditioning unit was not  
105 enclosed, as well as the trash enclosure.

106 Vice Chair Denison pointed out that the NW corner retaining wall does not follow the  
107 natural contour of the hillside, and the front columns look like what not to do in the  
108 Design Guidelines. He also agreed with the need for more arborist clarification.

109  
110 Commissioner Pevsner stated that he has a long history with the project and Lot 22. He  
111 stated that he agrees with others' concerns, and would like to add concerns about the  
112 location of the garage.

113  
114 Chair Spears commended the applicant on this design, but he felt that the basement is  
115 underutilized. He commended staff on the list of concerns, which he feels is on point  
116 and need to be addressed. He too agreed that further clarification is needed from the  
117 arborist.

118  
119 Chair Hutt stated that most Sierra Madre residents would like to see single story or no  
120 development, on the site, but need to accept that development will happen.

121 He pointed out that the Commission has recently approved new large houses with good  
122 designs but feels that this house is not a good design.

123 Chair Hutt stated that he has several concerns in addition to what has been stated prior.  
124 He feels that this is a decent design for flatlands. He feels that the 'eclectic' design  
125 seems haphazard, and that it is not responsive to the site or hillside and that it does not  
126 blend in with its hillside location.

127 Chair Hutt pointed out that the application itself has a lot of inconsistencies and  
128 inaccuracies such as the total amount of permeable and impermeable surfaces.

129 He also felt that the garage needs to be pushed back farther as it adds to bulk and  
130 mass in the current configuration with the roof.

131 Chair Hutt felt that the giant roof slope does not work, nor do the windows.

132 He also felt that the fake rock facade does not blend and suggested using real local  
133 stone.

134 Chair Hutt stated that he has an issue with the location of the two-story massing; he  
135 appreciated that the second story is smaller, but feels that the two-story massing of the

136 south elevation will loom over the future house to the south. He suggested flipping the  
137 two-story massing to the north, where it would work better with the natural slope.  
138 Chair Hutt noted that the height noted on the plans are measured from finished grade  
139 and stated that he would like to see measurements from natural grade. He also  
140 requested that the garden wall plans be consistent.

141 He pointed out that the Landscape plan shows planting under protected trees. He also  
142 feels that the arborist report needs much clarification. He suggested that the applicant  
143 provide the arborist the plans for the house/walls/etc. Chair Hutt stated that he could  
144 not approve the arborist report as is. He pointed out that the lawns do not comply with  
145 water efficient landscaping and that the infiltration system under the driveway may be  
146 ineffective.

147 Chair Hutt pointed out that the neighborhood analysis shows the floor area inaccurately  
148 and does not reflect that the garage is larger than most.

149 He stated that he would like to see one or two more iterations to approve. He  
150 encouraged the applicant to take a step back and look at the project holistically.  
151

152 Richard McDonald

153 Mr. McDonald stated that he is speaking on behalf of the applicant and that they would  
154 like to continue to work with staff. He suggested that they would be willing to meet with  
155 staff and have clear direction. Mr. McDonald also stated that he would like the  
156 information about recently approved houses for reference.  
157

158 Director Gonzalez suggested continuing to November 15<sup>th</sup> or December 6<sup>th</sup> to allow the  
159 applicant enough time to modify the building plans and elevations.  
160

161 Mr. McDonald stated that they would prefer December 6<sup>th</sup>.  
162

163 Commissioner Catalano suggested that the applicant consider presenting a physical  
164 model. Commissioner Desai and Chair Hutt agreed that a model is extremely helpful.  
165 Commissioner Spears pointed out that it gives the architect the ability to show the entire  
166 program with landscape and slope.  
167

168 Commissioner Denison pointed out that all of the drawings only show the house to  
169 north, and that he is concerned with the impact on the house to the south. He felt that  
170 as there are currently no approved plans for the house to north, that it is best to either  
171 remove them both from the examples, or give a placeholder for the house to south.  
172

173 **Action: Commissioner Desai moved to continue this item to December 6, 2018.**  
174 **Commissioner Spears seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**  
175

176 **Oral Communication**  
177

178 **Audience**  
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180 None.  
181

182 **Planning Commission**

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184 None.

185

186 **Staff**

187

188 Director Gonzalez stated that there are currently two projects scheduled for the October  
189 18, 2018 meeting.

190 He also reminded the Commission of the upcoming Joint Planning Commission/City  
191 Council meeting to be held on October 23, 2018 at 6:30 pm.

192

193 Chair Hutt adjourned the meeting at 8:40 pm

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Secretary to the Planning Commission

200 Vincent Gonzalez, Director of Planning & Community Preservation