



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Regular Meeting
February 5, 2015

West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers
625 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood, California 90069

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Huebner called the meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:35 P.M.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Todd Elliott led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **ROLL CALL:**
Commissioners Present: Altschul, Buckner, DeLuccio, Shink, Yeber, Vice-Chair Aghaei, Chair Huebner.

Commissioners Absent: None.

Staff Present: Adrian Gallo, Associate Planner, Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer, David DeGrazia, Current and Historic Preservation Planning Manager, Christi Hogin, Assistant City Attorney and David Gillig, Commission Secretary.
4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA.**
ACTION: Approve the Planning Commission Agenda of Thursday, February 5, 2015 as presented. **Moved by Vice-Chair Aghaei, seconded by Commissioner Altschul and passes.**
5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**
A. January 15, 2015

ACTION: Approve the Planning Commission regular meeting minutes of Thursday, January 15, 2015 as presented. **Moved by Commissioner DeLuccio, seconded by Commissioner Shink and passes; noting Commissioner Yeber abstaining.**
6. **PUBLIC COMMENT.**
TOM DEMILLE, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented on the upcoming General Municipal Election and encouraged voter participation on Tuesday, March 3, 2015.

CHAD BLOUIN, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented on the public notification process.

STEVE MARTIN, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented on the recent campaign issues and concerns.

STEPHANIE HARKER, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented on the (1123-1127) Detroit Street Bungalows.

CATHY BLAIVAS, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented on the (1123-1127) Detroit Street Bungalows and suggested a possible building moratorium on the eastside of West Hollywood.

7. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT.** None.
8. **ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS.** None.
9. **CONSENT CALENDAR.** None.
10. **PUBLIC HEARINGS.**

A. 1249 N. Formosa Avenue:

Adrian Gallo, Associate Planner provided an oral and visual presentation and background information as presented in the staff report dated Thursday, February 5, 2015.

He presented a history of the project site and stated the proposed project is a request to demolish three dwelling units and to construct a three-story, five-unit condominium building with at-grade parking.

The townhouse-style development is proposed to contain 7,500 square feet of livable space. The project includes three units with two bedrooms and two units with one bedroom. The project provides nine standard parking spaces and one guest parking space. Four of the units have two side-by-side dedicated parking spaces and one of the units has a single space; which are located within individual private garages.

The project is subject to the Green Building Ordinance, and will exceed the City's current 60-point green building requirement by proposing a 92-point building. By reaching the 90-point threshold, the project will benefit from one of the "green" incentives the City provides. As an incentive, the applicant has requested to divide the required 500 square feet of common open space among each of the five units.

The proposed project complies with all the City's standards for residential districts, multi-family dwellings and general development standards.

Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer presented the design review report. She stated staff is in support of this project design. This project has three-dimensionality at the front and sides; the street façade is developed with several layers, the second level steps-back from the ground floor with a generous balcony along the front. It creates a layered, three-dimensional façade that appears open to the street. The horizontal and vertical play of forms breaks down the scale in an arrangement that will provide a respectful transition to the existing, smaller scale development on either side.

One of the challenges for this typology is finding space for landscaping. The applicant has provided some landscaping around the perimeter. Staff would recommend every available space be used for landscaping, with the potential for using grasscrete or other techniques. She suggested that should be applied as a condition. The design has improved and staff is in support.

Adrian Gallo, Associate Planner continued staff's presentation. He stated the proposed project is a five-unit condominium building with two residential floors above at-grade parking. The building is designed in a modernist style with all units in a townhouse configuration. The project incorporates sustainable design principles according to the City's Green Building Ordinance. The development is complementary to the context of the neighborhood, and is designed to meet the intent and requirements of the City's Zoning Ordinance.

Staff recommends approval of the project.

Commissioner DeLuccio requested clarification regarding the landscaping.

Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer, clarified that it is recommended that additional landscaping should be included in the conditions.

Adrian Gallo, Associate Planner clarified Condition 8.7 of draft Resolution No. PC 15-1111 addresses the landscaping concerns.

Commissioner DeLuccio requested clarification regarding the square-footage of the common open space.

Commissioner Yeber requested clarification regarding the dimensions of the drive aisle, and the dimensions of the planters located by the garages. He stated he has concerns this may have difficulty working; in terms of vehicles coming in and getting out successfully.

Adrian Gallo, Associate Planner stated Bob Cheung, Senior Transportation Planner reviewed the plans; he did not think it was necessary for any additional circulation plans. He was able to determine the dimensions provided were enough for the vehicles to get in and out.

He stated the city has approved a similar design with the same programming at 1128 N. Ogden Drive. It had the same back-up distance and same design. Therefore, staff concluded it was acceptable dimensions for the drive aisle.

He further stated the guidelines for the drive aisle is typically 26'. That can be reduced; by showing what they currently have will work. Bob Cheung, Senior Transportation Planner reviewed the schematics, and confirmed it would work with a back-up system that is less than 26'; which is now 20'.

David DeGrazia, Current and Historic Preservation Planning Manager confirmed for the record the 26' is a standard, but it is not in the zoning ordinance as a required standard. There is flexibility. The way staff normally figures that out is with a template.

Commissioner Yeber questioned and requested clarification regarding the dimensions of the automated carousel. He stated his concerns with the overhang on the first floor; approximately 13' - which is much greater than the 1/3 normally allowed in a cantilever situation. He stated that will impact the wall dimension below, thereby making the clearances even smaller; potentially for both the drive aisle, but also the clearances within each individual garage. He also questioned how the stair condition was calculated in terms of clearances; and that a car does not run into the stairs.

Adrian Gallo, Associate Planner clarified they should have enough clearance under the staircase. He confirmed that they would make it work.

Commissioner Altschul questioned if there is any impact on the drive aisles due to the size of the units.

David DeGrazia, Current and Historic Preservation Planning Manager stated when the volume of cars is reduced; there is more flexibility in terms of some of those requirements; since there is not the same volume of vehicles that will be passing each other at the same time.

Commissioner Altschul stated there is a sizable difference of 8'. He questioned if a caveat could be inserted into the sales materials to prospective buyers or renters; that they be encouraged to test their cars in the driveway or in the garage, prior to considering renting, buying, or occupying.

David DeGrazia, Current and Historic Preservation Planning Manager stated that is possible.

Commissioner Yeber requested clarification regarding the turning radius based on the number of vehicles going back and forth.

David DeGrazia, Current and Historic Preservation Planning Manager stated there is not a difference in the turning radius. As long as the turn can be made, staff does not necessarily require the same width. The radius would stay the same. Staff is more comfortable with it being a little smaller, rather than in a high volume garage with traffic.

Commissioner DeLuccio had no official disclosures.

Commissioner Shink had no official disclosures.

Commissioner Altschul had no official disclosures.

Commissioner Buckner had no official disclosures.

Commissioner Yeber had no official disclosures.

Vice-Chair Aghaei had no official disclosures.

Chair Huebner had no official disclosures.

Chair Huebner opened the public hearing for Item 10.A.:

TODD ELLIOTT, LOS ANGELES, applicant's representative, presented the applicant's report. He provided a history of the property, design analyses and neighborhood compatibility. He stated they are amicable and will work with the urban designer to find every square-foot of space regarding the landscaping and green space regarding Condition 8.7 of draft Resolution No. PC 15-1111. He introduced the architect.

ANDREA KELLER, LOS ANGELES, architect, continued the applicant's report. She spoke and detailed neighborhood compatibility, privacy concerns, site plan, turning radiuses, planters, automated carousel (weight and turning dimensions), floor plans, unit sizes, private open space, roof space, landscaping, and building materials.

Commissioner Altschul questioned if there is any provision on the outside of the building to indicate whether or not the visitor parking space is occupied; so that it prevents someone from going down the slope to discover the visitors' space is occupied.

ANDREA KELLER, LOS ANGELES, architect, stated there is no change in grade from the street, therefore the visitor's space would be visible through the gate.

Commissioner Altschul questioned if they would consider some kind of signalization on the outside of the building indicating the visitor space is occupied.

ANDREA KELLER, LOS ANGELES, architect, stated they would be amenable to adding that condition.

Commissioner Yeber questioned the operation of the automated carousel. He further questioned why no substantial plant growth; i.e. trees, were put in the front yard setback.

ANDREA KELLER, LOS ANGELES, architect, clarified the operation of the carousel and stated it would be striped for parking. The landscaping was increased, but they would be open to adding trees in the front yard setback.

Commissioner Yeber questioned the design of the cantilever and asked if this might further impede the clearances. He questioned if there are some contingencies to make sure the clearances stay intact.

ANDREA KELLER, LOS ANGELES, architect, stated that was a primary concern during the design process. In the plan they had it engineered and verified that the dimensions worked. She indicated there is a substantial grade beam below the surface connecting all of the garage posts and it is also tied into the concrete of the floor above. So there is a massive frame to support it. Even though it is further back than 1/3rd the rear wall of the property is pulling that slab down. She reiterated, the engineer has verified the dimensions exactly and they did into proceed with the cantilever until confirmation from the engineer.

Commissioner DeLuccio commented on the automated carousel and questioned if there were any other options available.

TODD ELLIOTT, LOS ANGELES, applicant's representative stated a lot of times guest parking spaces are put in the back, and you have to make a 3, 4 or 5 point turn for access. The developer wanted to make something very easy so that when people came to visit, they will actually be able to use the guest space. He stated this is a project benefit. They are not trying to make the guest space unusable, but to make it very usable. He reiterated they are amicable to adding a condition regarding a mechanism allowing guests to see if the space is available.

Commissioner Shink questioned if the applicant is also open to landscaping both the north and south perimeters.

TODD ELLIOTT, LOS ANGELES, applicant's representative, stated the applicant will work with the urban designer until staff is satisfied with the landscape plan.

Vice-Chair Aghaei questioned if the applicant would be allowed to have a guest parking space in the back without a carousel, based on how the project is currently configured.

Adrian Gallo, Associate Planner stated it would impede the last unit and would not work. The carousel is necessary and is what makes this plan work.

CHAD BLOUIN, WEST HOLLYWOOD has concerns regarding this item. He stated his support of the design, but stated he would like to see the footprint reversed. He also spoke regarding parking.

STEVE MARTIN, WEST HOLLYWOOD has concerns regarding this item. He spoke regarding the driveway fence, turning radiuses, landscaping and home ownership.

ANDREA KELLER, LOS ANGELES, architect, stated they had an issue with the driveway being very close to Fountain Avenue and the sun extending to the living spaces of the project. That is why the project is oriented as it is proposed.

TODD ELLIOTT, LOS ANGELES, applicant's representative, reiterated the concerns with Fountain Avenue regarding traffic and accidents.

Commissioner Yeber questioned the applicant if they would be amenable to changing the trash bin configuration. He suggested sliding gates; instead of the proposed gates that swing outward.

ANDREA KELLER, LOS ANGELES, architect, stated they would be amenable to that change.

Commissioner Yeber questioned the applicant if they would be amenable to pushing back the planters three feet on the roof to allow for additional privacy to the neighbors to the north and south of the property.

TODD ELLIOTT, LOS ANGELES, applicant's representative, stated the planters have already been set-back on the roof top. In regards to the trash, he stated they have worked with the Public Works Department, and there is a great struggle of how they want the trash area to work. He stated they are amenable to a condition to continue to work with Public Works to make it as functional as possible.

Chair Huebner presented the Design Review Subcommittee report. The subcommittee supported the project and stated it was very well designed. Some of the contrast in the original design was a little strong, and that has been softened and greatly improved. The integrity of the architecture was kept and it is a beautiful building.

ACTION: Close public hearing for Item 10.A.: **Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.**

Commissioner Altschul stated the design is quite effective and quite nice. The eastside has wanted new, good, market rate units and this is a wonderful contribution toward that goal. He stated he would like to see two conditions added when a motion is made:

1) no less than 14 point type; a strong suggestion that potential occupants try their vehicles to make sure they can navigate the parking spaces before they enter into any contracts; and

2) the signalization clearly on the outside of the building when the guest parking space is occupied.

Commissioner DeLuccio moved to: 1) approve staff's recommendation of approval; and 2) add the suggested conditions from Commissioner Altschul.

Seconded by Commissioner Altschul.

Commissioner DeLuccio commented this is a really good project for the eastside of West Hollywood and stated his support.

Commissioner Shink stated this will be an improvement from what is currently there. The design review did a great job. The renderings match with the neighborhood and she commended the partnership between residents and the developers. She stated her support of the project.

Vice-Chair Aghaei commented on the drive aisle and is curious to see the carousel in operation. He stated his support for the project.

Commissioner Buckner stated she can support the motion with the added conditions. She commented on the landscaping, and looks forward to the completion of the project.

Commissioner Yeber stated overall it is a good design. He would have liked to see the street façade a little stronger, or more delineated. He suggested additional trees be added to the front yard setback, and work with the urban designer making sure there is a buffer zone across the south and north facades on the roof; to be sensitive to privacy for the properties on each side of the project. He spoke of the carousel regarding safety and the need to minimize any damage to both the building and vehicles. He stated his support of the project.


Chair Huebner stated his support of the project with the additional conditions.

ACTION: 1) Approve the application; 2) Adopt Resolution No. PC 15-1111 as amended: *a) printed in no less than 14 point type; potential occupants shall test their vehicles to make sure they can navigate the parking spaces before they enter into any type of contract; and b) signalization shall be clearly displayed on the outside of the building when the guest parking space is occupied:* "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, CONDITIONALLY APPROVING A DEMOLITION PERMIT AND DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, FOR THE DEMOLITION OF THREE DWELLING UNITS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A THREE-STORY, FIVE-UNIT CONDOMINIUM BUILDING, LOCATED AT 1249 N. FORMOSA AVENUE, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA;" 3) Adopt Resolution No. PC 15-1112 as presented: "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, CONDITIONALLY APPROVING A VESTING TENTATIVE TRACT MAP

(MAJOR LAND DIVISION NO. 72795), FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1249 N. FORMOSA AVENUE, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA;” and 4) Close Public Hearing Item 10.A. **Moved by Commissioner Altschul, seconded by Commissioner DeLuccio and unanimously passes.**

11. **NEW BUSINESS.** None.
12. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS.** None.
13. **EXCLUDED CONSENT CALENDAR.** None.
14. **ITEMS FROM STAFF.**
 - A. **Planning Manager’s Update.**
David DeGrazia, Current and Historic Preservation Planning Manager, provided an update of upcoming projects.
15. **PUBLIC COMMENT.** None.
16. **ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS.** None.
17. **ADJOURNMENT:** The Planning Commission adjourned at 7:45 P.M. to a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, February 19, 2015 beginning at 6:30 P.M. until completion at West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers, 625 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood, California. **Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.**

APPROVED BY A MOTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD ON THIS 19TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2015.



ROY HUEBNER, CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:



DAVID K. GILLIG, COMMISSION SECRETARY