



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Regular Meeting
August 20, 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 6:32 P.M.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Councilmember Heilman led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS I:**
 - A. **Oath of Office**

The Oath of Office was administered to David Aghaei by Councilmember Heilman, for a term ending May 31, 2017.
4. **ROLL CALL:**

Commissioners Present: Aghaei, Buckner, DeLuccio, Jones, Lightfoot, Vice-Chair Altschul, Chair Huebner.

Commissioners Absent: None.

Staff Present: Antonio Castillo, Associate Planner, Jennifer Alkire, Senior Planner, Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer, David DeGrazia, Current and Historic Preservation Planning Manager, Christi Hogin, Assistant City Attorney, and David Gillig, Commission Secretary.
5. **SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS II:**
 - A. **ELECTION OF CHAIR.**

ACTION: Elect John Altschul as Chair of the Planning Commission for a term through June 30, 2016. **Moved by Commissioner Buckner, seconded by Commissioner Lightfoot and unanimously carried.**
 - B. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR.**

ACTION: Elect David Aghaei as Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission for a term through June 30, 2016. **Moved by Chair Altschul, seconded by Commissioner DeLuccio and unanimously carried.**
6. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA.**

ACTION: Approve the Planning Commission Agenda of Thursday, August 20, 2015 as presented. **Moved by Commissioner Buckner, seconded by Commissioner Huebner and unanimously passes.**

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

A. August 6, 2015

ACTION: Approve the Planning Commission regular meeting minutes of Thursday, August 6, 2015 as presented. **Moved by Commissioner DeLuccio, seconded by Commissioner Buckner and passes, noting Commissioner Aghaei abstained.**

8. PUBLIC COMMENT.

DAN MORIN, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented on and had concerns regarding future development within The City of West Hollywood.

DONALD ELMBLAD, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented on the ethics regarding SB 1818.

STEPHANIE HARKER, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented how development standards are impacted by the general plan and municipal code.

9. DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

Stephanie DeWolfe, Community Development Director presented the Director's Report.

City Council Meeting - Monday, August 3, 2015:

She stated City Council conditionally approved the project at 8899 Beverly Boulevard. Additional conditions were placed on the project; which included all entitlements to expire in eighteen months; including the Specific Plan.

City Council heard an item regarding pedestrian safety on the Westside. Council directed staff to install traffic signals at four intersections along Santa Monica Boulevard; including Palm Drive, Hancock Avenue, West Knoll Drive, and Westmount Drive. In addition to the traffic signals, there will be additional traffic improvements made to improve pedestrian safety.

A citywide bike share program was also approved. City Council directed staff to negotiate with Cycle Hop regarding the installation and operation of a 150-bike smart system, and requested staff to launch a public outreach process to solicit community input on potential bike share locations.

She stated the first City Council meeting in September has been cancelled. The next regular City Council meeting will be on Monday September 21, 2015.

10. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS.

Commissioner Jones welcomed and congratulated Commissioner Aghaei.

Commissioner Buckner welcomed Commissioner Aghaei and congratulated Chair Altschul.

Commissioner Lightfoot thanked outgoing Commissioner Heidi Shink for her service, welcomed Commissioner Aghaei and congratulated Chair Altschul.

Commissioner Huebner welcomed Commissioner Aghaei and congratulated Chair Altschul.

Commissioner DeLuccio welcomed Commissioner Aghaei and congratulated Chair Altschul.

Commissioner Aghaei thanked Councilmember Heilman for the re-appointment and swearing in ceremony. He is looking forward to working with his fellow commissioners and staff, and congratulated Chair Altschul.

Chair Altschul welcomed and congratulated Commissioner Aghaei, and thanked Commissioner Huebner for his service as Chair during the last year.

10. **CONSENT CALENDAR.**

A. **8557 West Knoll Drive:**

The Planning Commission directed staff to bring back amended resolutions conditionally approving the request to demolish a single-family dwelling and construct a five-unit townhouse condominium development over one level of parking.

ACTION: 1) Adopt Resolution No. PC 15-1138 as presented: "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, APPROVING A DEMOLITION PERMIT, DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, AND VARIANCES FOR MINIMUM DENSITY, FRONT YARD SETBACK, AND MAXIMUM AVERAGE UNIT SIZE, PERTAINING TO THE DEMOLITION OF A SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE AND CONSTRUCTION OF A FIVE-UNIT TOWNHOUSE BUILDING OVER A SUBTERRANEAN PARKING GARAGE, LOCATED AT 8557 WEST KNOLL DRIVE, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA; and 2) Adopt Resolution No. PC 15-1139 as presented: "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, APPROVING A TENTATIVE TRACT MAP (MAJOR LAND DISVISION NO. 73636, FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 8557 WEST KNOLL DRIVE, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA." **Moved by Commissioner Buckner, seconded by Commissioner DeLuccio and passes, noting Commissioner Huebner and Vice-Chair Aghaei abstaining.**

B. **948 N. San Vicente Boulevard:**

The Planning Commission received an update on the request to demolish three multi-family apartment buildings on two contiguous lots and construct a four-story, eighteen-unit apartment building with a subterranean parking garage.

ACTION: 1) Receive and file. **Moved by Commissioner Buckner, seconded by Commissioner DeLuccio and passes, noting Commissioner Huebner and Vice-Chair Aghaei abstaining.**

11. PUBLIC HEARINGS.

A. 812 and 814-816 N. Huntley Drive:

Antonio Castillo, Associate Planner provided an oral and visual presentation and background information as presented in the staff report dated Thursday, August 20, 2015.

He provided a history of the project site and stated the request is to demolish a single-family dwelling and construct an approximately 10,352-square-foot, two-story, five-unit townhouse development over one level of subterranean parking. The project also includes a request for a vesting tentative tract map.

The site is located within the R2 zone on a combined lot of approximately 11,600-square feet.

He stated each townhouse unit will include two-bedrooms, 2.5 baths, and a study/guest room within a square footage ranging from 1,768 to 2,056 square feet. The units will each include private open space within second floor balconies and rooftop patios. The three units with direct rear yard access include an additional private patio on the ground floor. The subterranean garage includes two private parking spaces for each unit and a private stair case leading from the garage to the first floor of each unit. Adjacent to each individual garage space is a secure storage and mechanical equipment room. Two guest parking spaces will be provided within the parking garage.

The project was reviewed by the Planning Commission Design Review Subcommittee on two separate occasions. The original design included a seven-unit, three-story building. Since the first subcommittee meeting and with input from the neighbors, the applicant has significantly revised the project to eliminate the 3rd floor and reduce the density to five-units.

Overall, the subcommittee believed the project was well designed and were supportive of the project's compatibility with the neighborhood. The subcommittee suggested various architectural modifications to the exterior design, all of which were incorporated into a revised version of the building's design. A condition has been included in the draft resolution to require strict adherence to the final materials schedule.

Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer, presented the design review report. She stated this project was originally designed as a seven-unit project. The design was dramatically changed to a five-unit project, which is now very appropriate to the neighborhood.

The project is organized around a courtyard with a generous landscape in front. Staff supports this project, stating it is a nice addition to the eclectic neighborhood and is appropriately scaled to the neighborhood.

Antonio Castillo, Associate Planner continued the staff report. He stated City Council recently amended the West Hollywood Municipal Code to reflect the expiration of entitlements. He recommended Condition No. 1.4 of draft Resolution No. 15-1143 (page 3 of 7, tentative tract map) is revised to reflect the new code language as follows:

1.4) Approval of this map shall expire thirty-six (36) months from the date of approval by the Planning Commission, unless a final map has been approved by the City of West Hollywood, and recorded with the Los Angeles County Recorder. One extension of up to twelve (12) may be requested but cannot be approved unless Demolition Permit 14-0029 and Development Permit 14-0049 are also extended.

It is staff's assessment that this proposal is well suited for this site and the surrounding neighborhood. This project will provide five residential units; a net increase of two housing units to the City's housing stock. The proposed project is complementary to the context of the neighborhood and meets the development standards for residential buildings in this area.

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the project.

Commissioner Lightfoot requested clarification on the setbacks regarding the stairwells and chimney's.

Chair Altschul opened the public hearing for Item 12.A.:

STEPHEN M. ALBERT, MALIBU, applicant's representative, presented the applicant's report. He provided a history of the project and spoke regarding the decision of the redesign of the project.

BRUCE TRAUB, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of staff's recommendation of approval.

ARMANDO CHAPMAN, WEST HOLLYWOOD, opposes staff's recommendation of approval.

DONALD ELMBLAD, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of staff's recommendation of approval.

STEPHANIE HARKER, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of staff's recommendation of approval.

STEPHEN M. ALBERT, MALIBU, applicant's representative, presented the applicant's rebuttal. He commented on construction activities and mitigation.

Commissioner Lightfoot questioned if there is still opaque glass on the balconies, and requested clarification regarding the bamboo landscaping, and the design of the front setback.

STEPHEN M. ALBERT, MALIBU, applicant's representative, stated the opaque glass will be used for the balconies and detailed the height of the bamboo and front setback.

Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer stated staff requested another species besides timber bamboo, which was originally proposed on the sides. The new variety proposed grows between 15 and 20 feet; which will provide screening, but will also allow light to get into the neighboring property.

Commissioner Buckner questioned if the landscaping is drought tolerant.

Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer stated staff has reviewed the landscape plan and all the plantings proposed are drought tolerant.

ACTION: Close public hearing for Item 12.A. **Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.**

Commissioner DeLuccio commented on the renderings and the articulation of the buildings. He stated his support of the articulation and project.

Commissioner DeLuccio moved to: 1) approve staff's recommendation of approval.

Seconded by Vice-Chair Aghaei.

Commissioner Buckner commented how quickly the applicant changed and redesigned the project to alleviate the communities concerns. The project is beautiful and will add to the neighborhood. She stated if we must have development, this is the kind of project we would like to see happen. She stated her support of the project.

Commissioner Lightfoot stated this is a lovely project and stated her support of the amended height. She would like to see a little less structure on the roof and indicated it would be a nice amenity to see patios for the two front units in the front setback.

Commissioner Huebner commended the applicant and architect for being the most responsive to the neighborhood concerns. The scale and design is great, is simple and thoughtful. This could be a model project for the neighborhoods. He stated his support.

Vice-Chair Aghaei stated the applicant seemed to be very open to working with the neighborhood and very responsive to the community's concerns. He stated his support of the courtyard and design.

Commissioner Jones commended both the applicant and the community on their collaboration, and stated this is a strong project.

ACTION: 1) Approve the application; 2) Adopt Resolution No. PC 15-1142 as presented: "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, CONDITIONALLY APPROVING A DEMOLITION PERMIT AND DEVELOPMENT PERMIT FOR THE DEMOLITION OF ALL RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES ON TWO ABUTTING PARCELS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FIVE-UNIT TOWNHOUSE BUILDING CONSISTING OF TWO RESIDENTIAL STORIES OVER A SUBTERRANEAN PARKING GARAGE, LOCATED AT 812 AND 814-816 N. HUNTLEY DRIVE, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA; 3) Adopt Resolution No. PC 15-1143 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. 73219) FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 812 AND 814-816 N. HUNTLEY DRIVE, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA; and 4) Close Public Hearing Item 12.A. **Moved by Commissioner DeLuccio, seconded by Vice-Chair Aghaei and unanimously passes.**

Commission Secretary Gillig officially read into the record the appeal procedure for 812 and 814-816 N. Huntley Drive, West Hollywood, California:

The Resolution the Planning Commission just approved memorializes the Commission's final action on this matter. This action is subject to appeal to the City Council. Appeals must be submitted within ten calendar days from this date, to the City Clerk's office. Appeals must be in writing and accompanied by the required fees. The City Clerk's office can provide appeal forms and information about waiver of fees.

THE COMMISSION TOOK A TEN MINUTE (10) MINUTE RECESS AT 7:25 P.M. AND RECONVENED AT 7:35 P.M.

B. 1216 N. Flores Street:

Jennifer Alkire, Senior Planner provided an oral and visual presentation and background information as presented in the staff report dated Thursday, August 20, 2015.

She provided a history of the project and stated the applicant is requesting to construct a five-story, fourteen-unit condominium building with five units of affordable housing. The site is currently vacant.

She stated the original project was approved by the Planning Commission in 2009 and by the City Council on appeal in 2010. In May of 2014, those entitlements expired. The property owner has resubmitted the project with some minor changes.

The current plan includes balconies on the north side of the building, which are set back from the front of the structure, and are situated approximately ten feet away from the northern property line.

The open stair at the front of the structure has been extended to the roof level. She confirmed there have always been roof decks on the project. The elevation remains the same as the previous project.

The neighborhood meeting for the project was held in January 2015. Approximately twenty members of the public attended and expressed concerns about the size, scale and design of the proposed structure.

The project was reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission, because it is on the same block as five designated cultural resources, and adjacent to one resource.

Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer, presented the design review report. She stated this new project is a sophisticated and elegant design, and relates well to the surroundings. She detailed the materials, step backs, and massing. There were minor modifications made to the design; and maintains the integrity of the original design. She stated staff supports the design of the project.

Jennifer Alkire, Senior Planner continued the staff report. She stated the project includes five units of affordable housing. The site has a base density of ten units, and could therefore pay a fee in lieu of providing the onsite affordable units. The required number of on-site units is one. The applicant has elected to provide four non-required affordable units.

As such the applicant is asking for three concessions from the code: 1) height increase to 55 feet; 2) Increase in maximum average unit size; and 3) allowance for up to 40% of the parking spaces to be compact.

The average unit size and compact parking were part of the original project and were not approved through concessions. At the time the project went through the process, there was no maximum average unit size standard. In addition, policy concerning parking flexibility was also different.

The affordable units that are provided are clustered more than the City of West Hollywood would normally allow. This was an allowance made due to the fact that there were many more affordable units than required for the site.

The applicant has also requested two modifications: 1) a reduction to the southern side yard setback; and 2) a reduction to the rear yard setback.

A revised set of plans shows the elimination of the reductions for both of these setbacks. The applicant is asking to withdraw the modification requests.

She reiterated and clarified this proposed building was approved in 2010, the permits expired, and the applicant is reapplying for essentially the same building, with the addition of balconies on the north side and the extension of an exit stair from the fifth floor to the roof level.

The project includes five units of affordable housing where one would be required, and is asking for additional height, additional average unit size, and compact parking for 40% of the spaces.

She stated the applicant is officially withdrawing the request for side and rear yard setback reductions.

Staff recommends approval of the application.

Chair Altschul questioned if there are current renderings with the requested changes.

Jennifer Alkire, Senior Planner stated staff has not received current renderings of the proposed changes to the project.

Commissioner Lightfoot requested clarification regarding average maximum unit size, affordable housing units, and the density bonus. She questioned if Flores Street is in a parking district. She would like to see the resolution reflect there will be no parking passes for the residents of the project, other than the one-day visitor passes.

Jennifer Alkire, Senior Planner explained the calculations for maximum unit size, affordable housing units, and the density bonus. She confirmed Flores Street is in a parking district and the draft resolution will reflect the condition regarding no residential residential passes for residents of the project.

Commissioner Buckner disclosed for the record she had a phone conversation with Kate Bartolo, applicant's representative. They discussed matters contained in the staff report.

Commissioner Jones disclosed for the record she met with the applicant's representative. They discussed matters contained in the staff report.

Commissioner Lightfoot had no official disclosures.

Commissioner Huebner disclosed for the record he met with the applicant's representative. They discussed matters contained in the staff report.

Vice-Chair Aghaei disclosed for the record he met with the applicant's representative. They discussed matters contained in the staff report.

Commissioner DeLuccio had no official disclosures.

Chair Altschul disclosed for the record he met with Kate Bartolo, applicant's representative. They discussed matters contained in the staff report.

Chair Altschul opened the public hearing for Item 12.B.:

KATE BARTOLO, WEST HOLLYWOOD, applicant's representative, presented the applicant's report. She provided a visual presentation and provided a history of the project. She stated the revised request has a net reduction in the building size of 519 square feet; which eliminates the two modifications. She spoke and clarified SB 1818's three allowable incentives, inclusionary zoning, setback reductions, design standards and design compatibility, neighborhood compatibility, materials, height and massing.

She stated the project is consistent with the General Plan and Housing Element. It is CEQA exempt as an in-fill project, therefore, no traffic study is required. There is currently a net increase of nine units, zoning is consistent with high density residential, and there is no unreasonable impact for the net nine units on infrastructure. She detailed the parking requirements and stated this is outstanding architecture. The project is compatible with the City's standards.

Commissioner DeLuccio requested clarification regarding the balconies and the net square footage.

BOAZ MODOVSKY, LOS ANGELES, architect, provided a history of the current project and the past architectural firm. He detailed the modifications, which included the balconies on the north side to give more open space to the units. To reduce the mass of the building; they pushed the south west façade in an additional two feet at the fifth story, and on the northern side of the building; they pushed the building in an additional three feet, to lessen the impact to the neighbors.

Commissioner Lightfoot questioned the concessions regarding the height and maximum unit sizes.

STEPHANIE HARKER, WEST HOLLYWOOD, has concerns regarding this item. She spoke regarding the height and massing, historic buildings and neighborhood compatibility.

GEORGE CREDLE, WEST HOLLYWOOD, opposes staff's recommendation of approval.

GERNADY ERMAK, WEST HOLLYWOOD, opposes staff's recommendation of approval.

CHRIS STAUROUDIS, WEST HOLLYWOOD, opposes staff's recommendation of approval.

EDWARD LEVIN, WEST HOLLYWOOD, has concerns regarding this item. He spoke regarding the threshold standard for evaluating specific adverse impact to a building next to a historic resource.

CATHY BLAIVIS, WEST HOLLYWOOD, has concerns regarding this item. She spoke regarding neighborhood compatibility.

BECKY SNODGRASS, WEST HOLLYWOOD, opposes staff's recommendation of approval.

THE FOLLOWING DID NOT PUBLICLY SPEAK. THEY OPPOSE STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL: KRISY GOSNEY, WEST HOLLYWOOD, AND KATE EGGERT, WEST HOLLYWOOD.

KATE BARTOLO, WEST HOLLYWOOD, applicant's representative, presented the applicants rebuttal. She spoke regarding height and massing, elevations, design review process, concessions, density bonus, and landscaping.

ACTION: Close public hearing for Item 12.B. **Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.**

Chair Altschul stated this project is not compatible with the neighborhood, because the applicant cannot show the combined look as to what it is going to look like when it is done.

Commissioner DeLuccio questioned if the exit stairs were in the original project, and requested clarification regarding the balconies.

Jennifer Alkire, Senior Planner stated they added a piece of stair from the fifth floor to the roof deck. That is the piece they are willing to take out.

Commissioner Buckner had concerns stating current renderings are not available for the requested changes. She also had concerns regarding the construction of the balconies.

Jennifer Alkire, Senior Planner stated the balconies would be engineered to current building standards and reviewed in compliance with the building codes. She reiterated that the commission has all the appropriate plans and elevations; there is just not a photo rendering of the requested project.

Commissioner Buckner questioned the Urban Designer if staff is satisfied with the design and if it will be compatible with the neighborhood.

Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer stated there are a few minor changes that did occur. Staff has worked with the applicant's team to make certain the project maintained the intent of the original entitlement. The minor modifications included the balconies in the north-west corner.

She stated the stairs at the front; from the fifth floor to the roof, is not a positive change. Since it is not needed, staff stated it should be removed and conditioned.

Commissioner Huebner commented on the previous architect, and spoke on the design, stating it is a very interesting building and thoughtfully done. He spoke regarding the landscaping and neighborhood compatibility. He stated his support of the building and is confident in staff's recommendation. This will be an interesting addition to the neighborhood.

Vice-Chair Aghaei commented on SB 1818 and the minor changes. He stated this is an exemplary design and could support the project.

Commissioner DeLuccio commented on SB 1818 and stated he was supportive of the original project. He has concerns with the changes, but trusts staff and his fellow commissioner's comments. If this does move forward, he stated the staircase should be removed from the fifth floor to the roof, and the modifications should be removed. He has concerns with the north-west balconies and questioned if they are even needed.

Commissioner Lightfoot stated her concerns of not having accurate renderings and a model that is not current. She also had concerns with the concessions, increasing the maximum unit size, and does not feel comfortable waiving that concession. She spoke regarding the affordable housing units and clustering. She stated this should be fitting into the neighborhood better than it does.

Commissioner Jones stated she does not have concerns with not having a current rendering. She is in support of staff's recommendation of the minor design changes. She commented on SB 1818, concessions and stated the building is a little large, however the architecture is outstanding. She stated her support of the project

Commissioner Huebner moved to: 1) bring back a resolution approving staff's recommendations; which includes as conditions of the setbacks and the removal of the stairway.

Seconded by Vice-Chair Aghaei.

Commissioner DeLuccio commented on the maximum unit size and questioned the calculations of the affordable housing units.

ACTION: 1) Bring back resolutions of approval with the following conditions: *a) eliminate south side and rear yard setback modifications; and b) remove the staircase between the fifth floor and rooftop;* and 2) Close Public Hearing Item 12.B. **Moved by Commissioner Huebner, seconded by Vice-Chair Aghaei and passes; noting Commissioner Lightfoot and Chair Altschul Voting NO.**

12. NEW BUSINESS. None.

13. UNFINISHED BUSINESS. None.

14. EXCLUDED CONSENT CALENDAR. None.

15. ITEMS FROM STAFF.

A. Planning Manager's Update.

David DeGrazia, Current & Historic Preservation Planning Manager provided an update of upcoming projects.

16. PUBLIC COMMENT.

MICHAEL WOJTKIELEWICZ, WEST HOLLYWOOD, commented on affordable housing.

GEORGE CREDLE, WEST HOLLYWOOD, commented on architectural design standards.

17. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS.

Vice-Chair Aghaei thanked Commissioner Huebner for his role as Chair during the last year.

Commissioner DeLuccio thanked Commissioner Huebner for his role as Chair during the last year.

Commissioner Huebner thanked staff and fellow commissioners for the support as Chair during the last year.

Commissioner Lightfoot thanked Commissioner Huebner for his role as Chair.

Commissioner Buckner thanked Commissioner Huebner for his role as Chair during the last year.

Commissioner Jones thanked Commissioner Huebner for his role as Chair during the last year and congratulated Chair Altschul and Vice-Chair Aghaei.

18. **ADJOURNMENT:** The Planning Commission adjourned at 9:15 P.M. to a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, September 3, 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.**

