

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission

January 5, 2021 5:00 p.m.
8130 Allison Avenue, La Mesa, CA

This meeting was conducted utilizing teleconferencing and electronic means consistent with State of California Executive Order N-29-20 dated March 17, 2020, regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Wilcox called a regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL / ATTENDANCE

Members Attending: Chairman Wilcox, Vice Chair Pauli, Commissioners Arnote, Cary, Rogers, Sherman, Ullah and Ex-Officio Newland

Staff Attending: Senior Planner Kinnard

Absent: Commissioner Sherman

Visitors: 2020-48 Caitlin Murphy, Owner
Danilo Nesovic, Designer
2020-31 Brian and Jennifer Kick, Owners

3. DELETIONS FROM AGENDA /URGENT ADDITIONS None.

4. COMMUNICATIONS None.

5. PUBLIC DISCUSSION AND AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION None.

6. HEARINGS None.

Chairman Wilcox and Commissioner Rogers recused themselves from the first business item. Vice Chair Pauli stepped in to lead the meeting.

7. BUSINESS

7a. Project No. 2020-48 (Murphy) – Reconsideration of a proposed detached accessory dwelling unit at 4640 Date Avenue in the R1 (Urban Residential) zone. The Gertrude Park Updyke Home is a potential landmark in the Date Avenue Historic District.

Ms. Kinnard presented the staff report for this project and explained that, at the December 1, 2020 meeting, the HPC continued the item to a date certain of January 5, 2021, to allow the applicant time for a story pole to be erected to determine whether the overall height of the 7:12 roof pitch would be compatible and in scale with the front house. The Commissioners also requested that the story pole show the height of a 5:12 roof pitch. Ms. Kinnard added that the ADU structure complies with the zoning ordinance.

Staff went to the site and took photos, which were included in the staff report.

Mr. Nesovic felt strongly that the difference in the roof pitch from 5:12 to 7:12 was negligible.

The Commissioners discussed the project. Commissioner Cary said that the 7:12 pitch was out of character with the front house and the 5:12 pitch was more appropriate. He felt the scale was important.

Commissioner Arnote drove by the house and concluded the flag on the story pole showing the 5:12 pitch was much more appropriate in height as it would not dwarf the front house as well as other homes in the area. She said that the higher pitch would impact how the house looks from the front.

Commissioner Ullah walked around the house and agreed with Commissioners Arnote and Cary. He observed a noticeable difference between the steeper pitch and the lower pitch and concluded that the lower pitch is in keeping with the front house, especially when viewed from across the street. While conceding that neighboring houses have steeper pitches, the concern is not with whether the project is in keeping with the historic district, it is with the massing of the steeper pitched roof being extremely out of scale with the main house. He stated that the ADU cannot overwhelm or out-scale the front house.

Ex-Officio Newland was also in agreement and said that a mass and scale issue could affect potential landmark eligibility. He said the lower pitch was a better fit and less of a draw to the eye. He pointed out that the Commission's responsibility is to determine how the standards are applied to a potential resource in order to protect the integrity of the home as a potential historic landmark. He discussed historic integrity, or authenticity, as an eligibility consideration, and said that a lower pitch roof was preferable because it would not affect integrity.

Vice Chair Pauli thanked the applicant for installing the story pole. She explained the role of the Commission when reviewing a project. In accordance with the La Mesa Municipal Code, it is the Commission's responsibility to ensure that there is no adverse impact to the historical resource. She stated that the purpose of the historic review is to guarantee that the project meets the requirements of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and the Secretary of the Interior's standards.

Vice Chair Pauli then stated that, because the ADU is detached and set behind the main house and does not alter or destroy any historic fabric, the project as proposed complies with the Secretary of the Interior's standards. She did, however, prefer the 5:12 pitch.

Vice Chair Pauli made a motion to approve the project. Commission Cary seconded the motion.

Aye: Pauli
Nay: Cary, Ullah and Arnote
Absent: Sherman
Recused: Wilcox, Rogers
Abstain: None

Motion failed.

Commissioner Ullah made a motion to approve the project with the added condition that the roof have a 5:12 pitch. Commissioner Cary seconded the motion. Motion carried with Commissioners Cary, Arnote, Ullah, and Vice Chair Pauli in favor, none opposed, Commissioners Wilcox and Rogers were recused. Motion passed.

Aye: Pauli, Cary, Ullah and Arnote
Nay: None
Absent: Sherman
Recused: Wilcox, Rogers
Abstain: None

Ms. Kinnard read the appeal procedures and said that she would finalize and send out the Certificate of Appropriateness.

7b. Project No. 2020-51 (Kick) -- Consideration of a proposed detached accessory dwelling unit at 4538 Date Avenue in the R1 (Urban Residential) zone. The property is located in the Date Avenue Historic District

Ms. Kinnard presented the staff report. The two-story house on the lot is not listed on the Historic Resources Inventory and is not a contributing resource to the Date Avenue Historic District. The proposed project is a one-story ADU and will be located at the rear of the house facing Pasadena Avenue because the lot is a double-fronted site.

The ADU has a complex roof with gables and cross gables. It will sit upon a raised foundation. It has a low pitched roof, shingled siding, and colors to match the front house. It has architectural details such as bracing under the gables and decorative trim. The foundation will be RCP block.

Ms. Kinnard noted that, on the rear elevation showing the deck, shows supports with a thickening on the bottom, which doesn't match the front of the house. It is the only noted difference between the front and back of the ADU. Ms. Kinnard also mentioned that the retaining wall closest to the house should only have three feet of fill.

Staff determined that the project is compatible with the other house on the site as well as with the historic district. Staff recommended approval.

The representatives for the project explained that the posts weren't included on the front of the house because they would make the ADU too close to the main entrance. Chairman Wilcox said the design was great and he did not see a need to add posts to the front of the house. Vice Chair Pauli said the ADU would be a benefit to the street.

Chairman Wilcox made a motion to approve the project. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Pauli.

Aye: Pauli, Cary, Ullah and Arnote, Wilcox, and Rogers
Nay: None
Absent: Sherman
Recused: None
Abstain: None

7c. 2021 Work Plan Discussion

Regarding Item #4 (Consider Ordinance/Policy Updates), Vice Chair Pauli asked if it would be possible to have the HPC work on updating the Historic Preservation ordinance to present to the City Council. Ex-Officio Newland proposed the wording "Update Historic District eligibility criteria".

Commissioner Rogers felt that elevating City-wide historic buildings and parks should be included. This would fall under Item 2, "Improve public understanding of historic preservation". Ex-Officio Newland pointed out City-owned properties such as the Spring House and Nan Couts. Ms. Kinnard said that, through existing policies, powers, and duties, master plans for the parks would come before the HPC for discussion.

Commissioner Pauli and Ex-Officio Newland were in favor of moving Item 4 to the Item 1 position. The Commissioners would like to move forward with the ordinance update listed on the Plan. Ms. Kinnard explained that the current directive to staff is that no agenda item may be added that is not project related due to COVID. Chairman Wilcox, Vice Chair Pauli and Commissioner Rogers will hold an Ad Hoc meeting to work on the ordinance update.

Staff will bring the draft Work Plan back to HPC for further discussion and adoption at the February 2, 2021, meeting.

7d. Approval of the minutes from the January 5, 2021 meeting

Chairman Wilcox made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Vice Chair Paul seconded the motion.

Aye: Pauli, Cary, Ullah and Arnote, Wilcox, and Rogers
Nay: None
Absent: Sherman
Recused: None
Abstain: None

8. INFORMATION ITEMS

Ex-Officio Newland said that there is a need to get an estimate for a structural assessment in order to apply for a grant for the Spring House. He also mentioned that 8371 La Mesa Boulevard is back on the market. It is a 1926 building with a Lloyd Rocco front. There is also activity on the La Mesa Drug Store building. He told the Commission that the oldest house in La Mesa, the Grey House, just sold and the new owners have already contacted the Historical Society.

The Society received a plaster cast of some of the relief pattern from the First National Bank building, which was destroyed last May, from the owner of the property. The Society plans to include it in the Historic Landscape Interpretive Plan at the McKinney House.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Davis
Administrative Coordinator