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**CITY OF SIERRA MADRE  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

Regular Meeting of  
Thursday, February 20, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.  
City Council Chambers, 232 W. Sierra Madre Blvd.

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**CALL TO ORDER**

10 Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

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**ROLL CALL**

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

16  
17 **Absent** Commissioner Dallas

18  
19 **Staff:** Vincent Gonzalez, Director of Planning and Community Preservation  
20 Clare Lin, Associate City Planner  
21 Aleks R. Giragosian, Assistant City Attorney

22  
23

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

24 Vice Chair Denison moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Spears seconded. Motion  
25 carried unanimously.

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27

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 6, 2020**

28 Vice Chair Denison moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Desai seconded. Motion  
29 carried unanimously, with Commissioner Catalano abstaining due to his absence at that  
30 meeting.

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**AUDIENCE COMMENTS**

33 None.

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35

**PRESENTATION**

36  
37  
38

1. **2020 STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – SENATE BILL 330 HOUSING CRISIS ACT OF  
2019 (part two)**

39  
40 Assistant City Attorney Giragosian delivered a PowerPoint Presentation.

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**PUBLIC HEARING**

43  
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**Disclosure of Site Visits and Ex-parte Contacts**

45 Disclosure by Commissioners of site visits and Ex-parte Contacts

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1. **HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT 15-20 (HDP 15-20) AND CONDITIONAL USE  
PERMIT 15-21 (CUP 15-21)**

49 **Address: 1 Nathaniel Terrace (Lot 9)**

50 **Applicant: Robert Ho**

**Continued from November 21, 2019**

51  
52  
53 Director Gonzalez delivered a PowerPoint presentation.

54  
55 Everardo Garcia  
56 Applicant Architect - LCRA  
57 Mr. Garcia delivered a PowerPoint Presentation.

58  
59 **Discussion**

60  
61 Commissioner Desai felt that the revised design was responsive to the Planning Commission's  
62 direction. The project has identity and presents a clean aesthetic, and the overall massing is  
63 well balanced. He had the following comments related to aesthetics. The color shade  
64 separated by the first and second-story banding are too similar in tone. The base color should  
65 be a shade darker to achieve greater contrast, and he preferred that the color more closely  
66 blend with the hillside setting. He also noted that there may be an opportunity to introduce  
67 stone along the lower level east elevation to help ground the building to the site. He suggested  
68 to continue the banding on the west elevation to soften the two-story volume. Commissioner  
69 Desai stated he could support this project.

70  
71 Commissioner Spears stated that he likes the garage configuration and the subdued entry level  
72 door. He felt that the reconfiguration of the courtyard is clever. He has no issue for the request  
73 for a five-foot setback. The new retaining/utility wall is successful. He liked the rise of the  
74 building following the rise of the land. Commissioner Spears stated that he is in favor of the  
75 project and can make findings.

76  
77 Vice Chair Denison stated that he is happy with the roofline, but is not happy with the simplicity  
78 of the west building elevation. He also noted that although the building is response to the  
79 stepping up the hillside, he felt a better solution is to utilize a T-configuration.

80  
81 Commissioner Catalano agreed that color contrast is needed. He further suggested to use a  
82 color sample during construction on multiple elevations to determine the most effective color  
83 shade variation. He can support the requested five-foot setback along the west elevation. The  
84 new retaining walls are successful and indicated that he is glad that the low utility block wall was  
85 omitted. He also stated that he would like to see the mailboxes relocated.

86  
87 Commissioner Pevsner stated that he can make the findings.

88  
89 Chair Hutt felt that the applicant addressed the overall issue of bulk and mass. He agreed with  
90 Vice Chair Denison about the west elevation, but noted that it could be addressed by banding  
91 and color contrast. He stated that he likes the courtyard solution and entry steps that follow the  
92 grade of the land. However he expressed concern with the one-story southeast corner which  
93 appears and flat and there may be an opportunity for this feature to be more architecturally  
94 interesting. He also felt that the design would benefit with larger eaves.

95  
96 Everardo Garcia  
97 Applicant Architect  
98 Mr. Garcia assured the Commission that the landscaping will soften the corner.

99  
100 Action. Vice Chair Denison moved to approve Hillside Development Permit 15-20 (HDP 15-20)  
101 and Conditional Use Permit 15-21 (CUP 15-21) with the following conditions: (1) Continue the

102 banding on the west elevation to soften the two-story volume; (2) Study the color shade  
103 separated by the first and second-story banding using a darker tone or color at the base; and (3)  
104 Apply a color sample during construction on multiple elevations to determine the most effective  
105 color shade variation.

106  
107 Commissioner Spears seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

108  
109 Chair Hutt called for a three minute recess.

110  
111 **2. DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT 19-06 (DRP 19-06)**  
112 **Address: 1910 Santa Anita Avenue**  
113 **Applicant: PDS Studio Inc.**  
114

115 Associate Planner Lin delivered the staff report.

116  
117 Phillip Chan  
118 Architect

119 Mr. Chan explained the concept of the design, indicating that the second story massing was  
120 intentionally placed to the north, to make best use of the slope and to minimize impact on  
121 single-story home to the south. Mr. Chan stated that the proposed plan would not keep the  
122 circular driveway in favor of more landscaping. He also addressed the Commission's concerns  
123 about height, setback, and neighborhood impact and clarified that there are two fireplaces in the  
124 living room responded to question about condition of existing property line wall.

125  
126 **Discussion**

127  
128 Commissioner Spears felt that the design will fit in to the neighborhood well. He noted that the  
129 porch is for design purposes and doubts how much use it will get. He stated that the garage  
130 door is a large statement and should be broken up with two separate doors; however he stated  
131 that he can make the findings for approval.

132  
133 Commissioner Catalano stated that the house massing fits in well with the neighborhood,  
134 however, he felt that this item should be continued. He stated that that the conceptual grading  
135 plan has issues, therefore a new plan should be prepared by a civil engineer. Commissioner  
136 Catalano is concerned that the corrections will affect the final design. He also expressed  
137 concern with the proposed grade in relation to the oak tree. Commissioner Spear express that  
138 Arborist report was well done and received more information about site conditions in the report  
139 than the plans.

140  
141 Commissioner Pevsner stated that he likes the design, but would like to see more drawings and  
142 detail.

143  
144 Vice Chair Denison states that he likes the house. He stated that he reviewed it with neighbor  
145 impact in mind. He feels that the two-story is well proportioned and suited to neighborhood,  
146 and said that he can make the findings.

147  
148 Commissioner Desai agreed that there is information missing on plans. Elevations should  
149 reference up to the property lines. Concerned with grade difference from adjacent neighbors,  
150 and indicated that there is no reference to what is occurring at the property lines. The plans  
151 need to reference existing grade and show existing slope. Provide cross and longitudinal  
152 sections through the site and neighboring homes. He also requested that the grading plan on

153 Sheet CG-2 should be at a larger scale (1:10 or 1/8 scale). He expressed that the material color  
154 palette is too bright/white especially facing west and south during day light, and would like to  
155 see reconsideration of color and tone. He suggested that a darker tone will help to ground the  
156 house. Commissioner Desai also thought that the use of materials such as the cultured stone,  
157 could use more consideration.

158  
159 Chair Hutt felt that fundamentally, the plan is good in terms of massing and siting. He  
160 expressed that he does not have concern the with pad elevation. He noted that the prominence  
161 of the garage is of concern. He felt that the prevailing setback is inequitable and should be  
162 recalculated to determine if the front setback could be reduced. This could accommodate  
163 modification of building footprint by pushing one-story volume toward the street by 5 feet. He  
164 suggested to include the third house in the calculation. He disliked the cultured stone, stating  
165 that it is not native and not well placed on the project and would prefer something more  
166 appropriate for the design such as brick. He also agreed with Commissioner Desai on the use of  
167 color.

168  
169 Vice Chair Denison expressed concerns about the rear retaining wall, which is crumbling and  
170 needs replacement. The design and or treatment should be addressed early in the process.

171  
172 Phillip Chan  
173 Mr. Chan stated that he will sit with homeowner and work on details and revisions based on the  
174 Commission's comments. He said that he preferred to continue March 19th.

175  
176 **Action: Commissioner Catalano moved to continue this item to March 19, 2020.**  
177 **Commissioner Pevsner seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

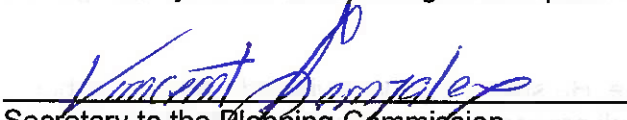
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179 **Oral Communication**

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181 **Audience**  
182 None.

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184 **Planning Commission**  
185 None.

186  
187 **Staff**  
188 Director Gonzalez stated that at the March 5, 2020 Planning Commission meeting the  
189 Commission will evaluate a Certificate of Appropriateness and may possibly discuss  
190 amendments to the Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance.

191  
192 Chair Hutt adjourned the meeting at 9:39 p.m.

193  
194  
195   
196 Secretary to the Planning Commission  
197 Vincent Gonzalez, Director of Planning & Community Preservation