

August 7, 2019

THE WALNUT CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

A Regular Meeting of the Walnut City Planning Commission (PC) was held on the above-referenced date. Chairperson Dy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE: Commissioner Fernandez

ROLL CALL: Commissioners: Dy, Koo, Fernandez, Perez, Wu

ALSO PRESENT: Assistant City Manager – Development Services Weiner; City Planner Carlson; Assistant City Attorney Mann; City Engineer Gilbertson; Senior Planner Vasquez; Senior Associate Planner Yang; Assistant Planner Munoz; Community Development Technician Katigbak.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

C/Dy opened Oral Communications for Public Comment(s).

C/Dy closed Oral Communications for Public Comment(s).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. July 17, 2019 (Regular Meeting Minutes).

PC/Wu abstained due to being absence from the July 17, 2019 PC Meeting.

PC/Perez motioned to approve the minutes of July 17, 2019. VC/Koo seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

PUBLIC HEARING(S):

2. Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 2019-002 (Shaolin Cultural & Kung Fu Center): A request to operate a child related martial arts center at 20427 Valley Boulevard (APN:8720-024-016).

AP/Yang presented the Staff Report.

C/Dy opened the item for Public Comment(s).

C/Dy closed the item for Public Comment(s).

PC/Perez questioned if the meditation service portion of the business would be offered to adults only.

Shaolin representative, Chris Lin mentioned that the meditation services are provided for customers of all ages.

VC/Koo asked Staff how long Shaolin Cultural & Kung Fu Center has been in operation at their current location.

AP/Yang stated that the business has been operating on Amar Road since 2013; six (6) years.

VC/Koo inquired if there have been any reports and/or incidents.

AP/Yang responded that there have been no reports of any incidents.

PC/Fernandez asked Staff if there are any proposed exterior improvements.

AP/Yang indicated that there are no proposed interior and/or exterior improvements at this time other than future signage.

MOTION ON ITEM 2

PC/Perez motioned to approve CUP 2019-002 for the Shaolin Cultural & Kung Fu Center. C/Dy seconded.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Dy, Koo, Fernandez, Perez, Wu

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

Motion passed 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS:

3. Sign Review (SR) 2019-031 (Mount San Antonio Center): A proposal to amend the existing Master Sign Program (MSP) for the Mount San Antonio Center located at 1247-1269 Grand Avenue (APN: 8712-033-007).

AP/Yang presented the Staff Report.

Sign Contractor, Christopher Kim introduced himself.

PC/Fernandez questioned if the MSP specifies patching and repairs when old tenants depart and new tenants move in.

Mr. Kim stated that page four (4) of the MSP indicates that tenants are liable for all wall repairs and removal of existing signage.

PC/Perez questioned if the amendment to the MSP is intended to modernize and/or enforce sign consistency by requiring “halo” illumination.

AP/Yang confirmed that the purpose of the amendment to the MSP was to keep the sign program of the shopping center current with the new light design. AP/Yang further elaborated by stating that all new tenants throughout the City are recommended to adhere to the “halo” illumination requirement.

C/Dy asked if there are any repair/repainting requirements that the tenants must follow when removing wall signage.

ACM/Weiner commented that it is the responsibility of the property owner and/or management group to upkeep all store frontage. ACM/Weiner further discussed how Code Enforcement (CE) plays a vital role in the process of property maintenance.

PC/Fernandez asked ACA/Mann if the PC can modify page four (4) to require all building repairs and for the paint color to match the existing building to the satisfaction of the Assistant City Manager – Development Services and/or the Community Development Department.

ACA/Mann confirmed that the PC may place said condition(s) in regards to the project.

ACM/Weiner commented that the portion of the MSP may be enhanced to better assist CE and would apply to any and all subsequent property owners.

PC/Wu asked for clarification on whether the MSP applies to the corner portion of the center or the entire shopping center.

AP/Yang stated that there are different owners at the shopping center; the MSP applies for the units illustrated on the site plan only.

PC/Wu asked if the remaining portions of the shopping center have their own sign program and if they are consistent with one another.

AP/Yang confirmed that most shopping centers have their own sign program and that in comparison, the programs require similar standards in relation to size and height.

ACM/Weiner commented that one thing that is not consistent with signage at the center is the requirement for “halo” illumination. ACM/Weiner stated that the only difference between the proposed MSP and others on site is that the MSP permits double stacked signs due to the size constraints of the store frontage. If in the case that a stacked sign is proposed, both tenants would be required to comply with the “halo” illumination requirement simultaneously.

PC/Fernandez asked what triggered the sign program update.

ACM/Weiner stated that the primary concern revolved around the double stacked signage not being compliant and consistent with the design standards of the existing sign program.

The PC, Staff, and Applicant further discussed sign consistency and features of “halo” illumination as opposed to reverse channel letters.

Mr. Kim supported the original proposal of front and back illuminated channel letters as it would gain more exposure during the evening hours. Mr. Kim further discussed that when a new MSP is adopted, all existing tenants and businesses are not required to update their signs to the new guidelines and that only new tenants must conform.

ACM/Weiner clarified that adoption of the new MSP would not require all existing tenants to update their signs, however, if double stacked signage is proposed, “halo” illumination will not only be required for the new tenant(s) but also for the existing tenant either below and/or above that proposed sign in order to conform with the MSP design guidelines.

C/Dy questioned if there is a reason why each tenant cannot reduce the size of their signs to avoid double stacked signage.

ACM/Weiner mentioned that by doing so, the overall signage within the shopping center would look cramped.

The Applicant, Staff, and PC further discussed the policy of the MSP and the circumstances wherein tenants would be required to conform to the new MSP design guidelines.

C/Dy closed the item for Public Comment(s).

VC/Koo commented that the action of Condition 1A is reasonable, however, it needs additional clarification.

PC/Perez supported front and back illuminated channel letters and the requirement that all existing tenants must adhere to the MSP guidelines of “halo” illumination.

C/Dy added that when a new tenant enters the Center it may be part of the added cost to upgrade the neighboring unit’s sign.

Mr. Kim stated that the Center will conform to the front and back illuminated channel letters requirement in order to preserve uniformity.

MOTION ON ITEM 3

PC/Fernandez motioned to approve SR 2019-031 subject to the attached COAs, with, the modification that the all signs must be halo illuminated and front lit, and the condition of repainting and repairing of the fascia to the satisfaction of the Assistant City Manager – Development Services. C/Dy seconded.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Dy, Koo, Fernandez, Perez, Wu
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

Motion passed 5-0.

- 4. Site Plan Case/Architectural Review (SPC/AR) 2018-085:** A proposal to develop six (6) existing residential lots with single-family homes and site improvements (APN: 8709-014-014, -018, -019, -020, -021, -022).

SP/Vasquez presented the Staff Report.

C/Dy questioned if the shared driveway served the purpose of minimizing grading and inquired if each home having an individual driveway, would violate fire regulations.

CE/Gilbertson mentioned that the purpose for the shared driveway was to allow residents to safely reverse from their dwelling unit.

PC/Perez asked if the shared driveway would serve as two (2) easements for ingress and egress and if the common area will have a cost for maintenance of the driveway.

SP/Vasquez confirmed that the shared driveway would serve as both ingress and egress and that there will be provisions that will be recorded in relation to the use and maintenance.

PC/Perez questioned if the maintenance will be pulled from property taxes or individual payments.

CE/Gilbertson stated there will be a driveway maintenance agreement that each property owner will be required to sign on a yearly basis.

C/Dy questioned what occurs if the driveway requires repair and nothing is done.

CE/Gilbertson commented that the City's Code Enforcement will get involved at that point.

C/Dy asked if there will be a formal Homeowner's Association (HOA) and easements involved.

CE/Gilbertson stated that everything but the driveway will be maintained by each of the individual properties and that there is no need for vehicular access easement.

PC/Wu questioned the turnaround area specifically for homes one (1) and six (6).

CE/Gilbertson stated that the proposed plan is conceptual and will be further reviewed during the City's plan check for any inconsistencies.

The PC and Staff further discussed the accessibility and usability of the shared driveway, the existing concrete pedestrian sidewalk and the implementation of the proposed equestrian and hiking trail pathway.

PC/Fernandez asked if there was a specific reason why the development did not opt for a concrete pathway.

CE/Gilbertson mentioned that the Castlehill area projects have a more rural aesthetic and not having concrete would be more fitting to the neighborhood's character.

C/Dy opened the item for Public Comment(s).

Architect, Rick Yeh introduced himself.

VC/Koo mentioned that the design of the proposed homes appears to be similar in style and suggested to rotate the architecture one-hundred and eighty (180) degrees; wherein the design of the six (6) homes do not appear identical in style.

Mr. Yeh mentioned that there are three (3) styles of homes, Spanish, Italian, and Craftsman. Mr. Yeh elaborated that the proposed floor plans are all different.

The PC and Applicant further discussed the site layout/topography and the home's design attributes.

ACM/Weiner commented that more impactful architecture may be arranged.

VC/Koo suggested that two (2) of the homes be mirrored to present the appearance of variety.

PC/Fernandez mentioned that the mass, scale, and floor plan are identical and that the exterior accents are little to no change in regards to the style and design. PC/Fernandez suggested mirroring house three (3) and six (6) wherein the front entrances of the homes would be located on the West side as opposed to the East; the garage would be closer to the Northern property line which then would achieve a better driveway clearance and break up the bulking of the six (6) homes.

Mr. Yeh mentioned that due to the slope that spans from East to West, it would not be possible for the floor plan to be mirrored.

VC/Koo mentioned two (2) options to achieve a better aesthetic to the homes; more impactful architecture and/or mirroring the homes one-hundred and eighty (180) degrees.

CE/Gilbertson suggested that Lots one (1) and four (4) would be better candidates to reverse due to minimal driveway grading.

C/Dy mentioned that flipping/mirroring the homes would be a great alternative and would prevent the construction of exterior stairs presenting the homes with more of an individual character.

PC/Perez stated that in addition to flipping Lots one (1) and four (4), the architecture can be softened at the corners.

Mr. Yeh mentioned that they will modify the plans to reflect the PC's requests.

C/Dy closed the item from Public Comment(s).

The PC further discussed support of the project with the exception of altering the architectural design in order to deviate from constructing homes that appear identical.

MOTION ON ITEM 4

PC/Wu motioned to approve SPC/AR 2018-085 with the alteration of the lot configuration for Lots one (1) and four (4) to mirror the existing site plan. PC/Perez added that further architectural enhancements shall be required to all six (6) homes.

ACM/Weiner questioned the PC on whether they wanted to see the item return.

ACA/Mann mentioned that the item would not be required to return if there is an understanding of the requested alterations and is consistent with PC/Wu's motion.

C/Dy seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Dy, Koo, Fernandez, Perez, Wu
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

Motion passed 5-0.

5. Site Plan Case/Architectural Review (SPC/AR) 2019-013 (Pang): A request to demolish an existing home and construct a single-family dwelling unit at 20856 Gartel Drive (APN: 8709-013-006).

AP/Munoz presented the Staff Report.

PC/Perez questioned if the property is designated as an equestrian property.

AP/Munoz confirmed that the property is within the Rural Overlay Zone.

C/Dy asked Staff if there were discussions regarding the basement and the appearance as a three (3)-story development.

AP/Munoz mentioned that the initial submittal consisted of a portion of the basement overlapping with the main residence wherein the three (3)-story element was present. AP/Munoz elaborated that the current proposed basement at no point overlaps with the main residence and, therefore, does not entertain a three (3)-story element.

ACM/Weiner mentioned that the three (3)-story concern was discussed intensely with the architect.

C/Dy opened the item for Public Comment(s).

Resident, Kenny Silverberg expressed concerns regarding the proposed fence located on the Southern side of the property and how it provides little to no purpose for screening and privacy. Mr. Silverberg elaborated that based off the elevations and the topography of the site, the proposed pool deck and fence are roughly the same height. Mr. Silverberg further suggested that the Applicant increase the height of the fence and/or infill the slope which would require higher fencing in order to help screen for privacy. Mr. Silverberg also discussed concerns regarding drainage and inquired on whether the metal guardrail would be removed.

CE/Gilbertson mentioned that the most northerly portion of the guardrail may be removed in order to provide access for the proposed driveway.

Resident, Liping Lu discussed concerns regarding privacy, drainage, and vehicular speed limits along Gartel Drive.

C/Dy inquired whether or not infilling the slope to increase the height of the fence, would satisfy resident concerns regarding privacy.

Ms. Lu stated that the existing trees and vegetation are the only elements that help with the concerns regarding privacy and that the suggestion of infilling the slope in order to increase the height of the fence would not solve the issue.

Designer, Gantcho Batchkarov briefly discussed the landscape design and mentioned that the proposed trees would provide adequate screening and privacy not just for the property owner but also for the neighboring properties. Mr. Batchkarov also stated that the issues regarding drainage will be discussed and worked on when the drawings are being produced, moreover, that the existing residence is not in conformance with the current WMC requirements. Mr. Batchkarov stated that the proposed development has been strategically laid out to minimize grading and follow the existing terrain of the site.

C/Dy commended the Applicant's architectural design and questioned how large and mature the proposed trees would be.

Mr. Batchkarov stated that the owner is open to recommendations and that the trees are to be mature.

The PC and Applicant further discussed the utilization and probable alternatives regarding the basement adjacent to the proposed pool.

C/Dy commented that the proposed development appears as a "red-flag" because it may set a precedent for residents residing in the hillside communities in order to develop staggering additions along the hillside.

Mr. Batchkarov mentioned that the purpose of the basement was to utilize wasted space. Mr. Batchkarov stated that any and all alterations will be made the PC deems necessary.

VC/Koo inquired if the Applicant had any simulations of the line-of-sight from the deck region to the pool area overlooking the neighboring properties; located on the Southern property line.

Mr. Batchkarov mentioned that privacy was considered from the neighboring properties with the proposed landscape.

PC/Fernandez mentioned that due to the nature of the project's significant cut to the existing terrain, could the export be utilized in order to fill the sloped region located on the Southern property line. This process would increase the level of the land in order to maximize adequate privacy and screening.

Mr. Batchkarov stated that the amount of grading and cut to the land is not significant enough to fill the sloped region.

VC/Koo stated that the amount of excavation is not significant enough to infill the southern property line's slope.

Resident, Kenny Silverberg suggested landscape with the same effect of hedges would be a great alternative to provide adequate screening between the two (2) properties.

C/Dy closed the item for Public Comment(s).

PC/Perez commended the Applicant's design and mentioned that the Applicant may be able to achieve the proper screening and privacy amongst the neighboring properties by selectively choosing the type of tree and/or vegetation.

C/Dy stated that the Applicant's design is exceptional and noted his opposition towards the basement and how it will set a precedent for residents to develop staggered homes along the hillsides. C/Dy further discussed alternatives regarding the basement area and the possibilities of relocating usable square-footage elsewhere on the property.

The PC further discussed the proposed basement element.

C/Dy suggested reducing the square-footage of the basement to present the effect that the home is not three (3)-stories.

VC/Koo stated that the proposed development appears as a two (2)-level home with a basement from the rear and a single (1)-story home from the right-of-way.

The PC further discussed concerns regarding proper screening and sufficient privacy through the implementation of landscape vegetation.

ACM/Weiner mentioned that the City utilizes a third-party licensed landscape plan check for projects of large intensity. ACM/Weiner stated that the neighboring resident(s) shall be included in the process of choosing the type and/or kind of landscape to be installed for proper screening and privacy.

MOTION ON ITEM 5

PC/Perez motioned to approve SPC/AR 2019-013 with the condition that the applicant work with Staff to identify the proper vegetation and/or trees with a significant density located on the South property line to address the privacy and screening issues. PC/Wu seconded.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Dy, Koo, Fernandez, Perez, Wu
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

Motion passed 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

NONE SCHEDULED

DISCUSSION/TRANSACTIONS:

NONE SCHEDULED

REPORTS AND COMMENTS:

NONE

ADJOURNMENT:

This meeting was adjourned at 9:13 p.m. The next Planning Commission Meeting is set for a regular meeting on Wednesday, September 18, 2019, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at Walnut City Hall (21201 La Puente Road).

Passed and Approved on the 18th day of September, 2019.

Chairperson, Heinrich Dy

Tom Weiner, Assistant City Manager – Development Services