

**MINUTES**

**CITY OF PACIFICA  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
2212 BEACH BOULEVARD**

October 2, 2017

7:00 p.m.

Chair Nibbelin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

Present: Commissioners Stegink, Cooper, Clifford and  
Chair Nibbelin  
Absent: Commissioner Gordon and Campbell  
(Note: Commissioner Campbell did not attend the  
meeting due to a presumed conflict of interest related to  
Agenda Item No. 1.)

**SALUTE TO FLAG:**

Led by Commissioner Stegink

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Senior Planner Murdock  
Asst. Planner Smith

**APPROVAL OF ORDER  
OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Clifford moved approval of the Order  
of Agenda; Commissioner Cooper seconded the motion.

The motion carried **4-0**.

Ayes: Commissioners Stegink, Cooper, Clifford and  
Chair Nibbelin  
Noes: None

**APPROVAL OF  
MINUTES:  
SEPTEMBER 18, 2017**

Commissioner Cooper moved approval of minutes of  
September 18, 2017; Commissioner Clifford seconded  
the motion.

The motion carried **4-0**.

Ayes: Commissioners Stegink, Cooper, Clifford and  
Chair Nibbelin  
Noes: None

**DESIGNATION OF LIAISON TO CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF OCTOBER 9, 2017:**

Senior Planner Murdock stated that they would not need a liaison.

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

None

**CONSENT ITEMS:**

None

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**1. PSD-820-17  
PV-518-17  
PE-172-17**

**SITE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT PSD-820-17; VARIANCE  
PV-518-17; AND PARKING EXCEPTION PE-172-17**

filed by Agent Brian Brinkman on behalf of Andrea Harries, to Construct a 973 sq. ft. Addition to an Existing 796 square foot Single Family Residence on a 5,419 square foot lot located at 111 Vallecito Lane (APN 018-134-040) in Pacifica; the front yard setback at first floor and the setback to the garage require a Site Development Permit and Variance; the number of garage parking spaces and off-street parking provisions require a Parking Exception. Recommended California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Status: Class 1 Categorical Exemption, CEQA Guidelines Section 15301.

Asst. Planner Smith presented the staff report.

Commissioner Clifford asked for confirmation that, although the existing home is non-conforming to current regulations, when it was built it was conforming.

Asst. Planner Smith stated that, when the property was built, the assumption was that it would have conformed with the standards at that time.

Commissioner Clifford was sure that was the case, but he wanted confirmation.

Commissioner Cooper thought it was a thorough report. He then referred to the usable living area and the setback to both the first floor and the second floor because there is a minimum required 26 feet setback to the second floor and they are proposing a setback of 15'-3".

Asst. Planner Smith stated that the standards in the zoning code applied to this project recommend certain standards for a nonconforming lot, and if the applicant complies with the nonconforming standards then a site development permit would not be required. In this instance, the applicant doesn't conform with the standards and a site development permit is required.

Commissioner Cooper understood, adding that there were two standards, one for the garage setback and then the standard for the second floor setback to the living area. He asked if that was correct, assuming they was asking for both variances.

Asst. Planner Smith stated that, if a site development permit is required because the application doesn't meet the standards set in the zoning code, then the standards that the application is assessed by would revert back to the underlying zoning code standards, which in this case is the R-1 zoning district, and the variance is only for the first floor setback with no setback required for the second floor under the R-1 zoning standards.

Senior Planner Murdock explained further that, to avoid the more rigorous review of a site development permit, the zoning code provides more restrictive setbacks. He stated that, in this case, the applicant has not met those setbacks which include the 26 feet to the second floor living area. As a result, after undergoing the more rigorous site development permit review process they are currently undergoing, the zoning reverts to the basic R-1 zoning standards. He stated

that there was no distinguishing between the first and second story in the setbacks in the R-1 zoning standards. He stated that ordinary living space was 15 feet and to the garage it was 20 feet.

Commissioner Cooper asked, assuming this was a one-car garage and there was a driveway in front of it, whether a car fit in the driveway as well.

Asst. Planner Smith stated that the driveway does not meet the requirements for a single car space of 9 feet by 19 feet, but there was sufficient space on the street for on-street parking.

Commissioner Cooper referred to the present garage space and where it was proposed to be, and he thought it was almost in the same spot.

Asst. Planner Smith agreed it was very similar, stating that it was set back slightly.

Commissioner Cooper concluded that adding the third bedroom requires them to provide for the second car garage parking spot.

Asst. Planner Smith explained that there was a provision within the nonconforming section of the code that, if you are increasing the number of bedrooms within a nonconforming structure, you are required to meet the parking standards for the zoning district to two garage parking spaces. He added that, because they are reviewing the application on the R-1 standards, that provision was still required, but not necessarily in the zoning codes to which they are referring.

Commissioner Cooper thought the house was constructed in 1953, four years prior to the City's incorporation.

Commissioner Stegink stated that he visited the site and asked if the applicant gave a reason for requesting the 14 foot, 6 inch width driveway.

Asst. Planner Smith stated that no reason was given for the width of the driveway. He thought the architect was trying to give as much space as possible to facilitate parking on the site but the zoning code standards set a maximum for a single car driveway of 12 feet which was why the conditions had been included.

Commissioner Stegink asked if they waive that on a regular basis.

Asst. Planner Smith asked for clarification.

Commissioner Stegink asked if they waive that 12 foot width on a regular basis.

Asst. Planner Smith was not aware that they do.

Andrea Harries, applicant, stated that she purchased the home in 2009, but now that her family is growing, she has been looking for a way to enhance the property from a safety perspective. That triggered a lot of the changes, such as the steep slope of the driveway and front steps. They have been an issue since they have had the home, and now they are doing a clean sweep and making the improvements across the board.

Brian Brinkman, designer, stated that there were three focal points to cover, accessibility and safety, create more space for the family and improve the overall aesthetics and function of the house. He stated that Ms. Harries touched on the accessibility and safety, adding that the front stairway was not to code and quite steep. He stated that the porch at the top was just over 2 feet deep and was not functional to open the door and get into the house. To alleviate that, they designed a new porch that met all the setbacks but provides more adequate space to enter the home, as well as redo the front stairs to meet code and be safer. He stated that the driveway and sidewalk was over 25% slope now and the project was driven with the desire to bring the garage down and expand the living space over the garage where it currently existed. He explained that they were not trying to bring the garage closer but drop it down at a more functional and safe elevation. Regarding the living area, he explained that as they have started a family they were looking for more space with an additional bedroom, second bathroom and more common space. He stated that they tried to design it to gain the most space with the least overall impact to the site. He acknowledged that a variance was required for the front setback, but they believe the addition proposed was the least impactful to the neighborhood and overall site as was possible. He stated that, regarding aesthetics and function, they felt the proposed home provided more character that will fit better into the cottage style homes in the neighborhood. He stated that the stairs and laundry have been moved from the garage to allow the garage to function better even if it is only a one-car garage. He stated that the house will also be better connected to the rear yard and the beautiful setting in the back where before there were bedrooms blocking any access and made it an unusable area. He stated that he has worked on a lot of projects in Pacifica and he tries to avoid needing a variance but, as they explored many concepts, it became apparent that short of demolishing the house and building a new one, the variance would be needed for the addition to meet safety and functional needs for them as well as providing the aesthetic that would improve the neighborhood. He referred to the lot width, stating that it is only a few feet narrower, but as they go back ten feet it meets the setbacks.

Commissioner Clifford asked why the driveway was not narrower to what the code would ordinarily require.

Mr. Brinkman asked if he meant that it was wider than normal.

Commissioner Clifford confirmed that he meant wider.

Mr. Brinkman stated that, with the reduced setback, they were trying to provide more area where they could park the car in the driveway.

Commissioner Clifford thanked him for explaining the reason.

Commissioner Stegink stated that he had looked at the area and there was no extra parking. He asked if he was saying that the 14 foot, 6 inch wide driveway will allow them to park in the driveway more frequently than a 12 foot wide driveway.

Mr. Brinkman agreed, explaining that they were trying to access the side of the driveway directly in front of the garage.

Commissioner Cooper referred to the elevation of the garage. He stated that they were looking at A3.4 in the exhibit and he thought it looked like the driveway slopes down into the garage. He

thought they were creating a reverse problem where they will have water coming off the driveway into the garage.

Mr. Brinkman stated that they will have a trench drain to catch water. He stated that part of trying to create enough space with the lot width being narrower than normal, there was a 25 foot height limit where there was normally a 35 foot height limit. They were keeping the house on that one level.

Asst. Planner Smith explained that the 25 foot height limit is set out within the nonconforming zoning standards and, as mentioned earlier, if they revert back to the R-1 development standards and regulations, the height limit will be 35 feet.

Commissioner Cooper assumed he could go up if he wanted to make the driveway slope to the street.

Mr. Brinkman stated that was to keep the living space above the garage and on the same level rather than creating stairs that need to go up above the garage.

Commissioner Cooper stated that water going back into a garage is a difficult thing to control especially with torrential rains. He referred to the back porch where there was a parapet fence rather than fencing, with no differentiation between a railing and a parapet. He thought that would drain over the top of the sliding glass door.

Mr. Brinkman stated that it was a solid wall.

Commissioner Cooper asked where the drainage to that deck was.

Mr. Brinkman stated that they would have it go out the back.

Commissioner Cooper asked if it was out the back of the design. He stated that the only drainage he saw was at the front toward the sliding glass window and he thought it might create some issues. He then referred to the retaining wall in the back, asking if there was a back drain on that retaining wall.

Mr. Brinkman stated that there will be.

Commissioner Cooper referred to the deck waterproofing and drainage, and he asked that they be very careful when they design that because they inherently leak. He then referred to the east elevation, the windows that go into the neighbor's area. He stated that currently there were no windows on that side and he was curious how those have been placed and if the neighbors have commented on that. He asked if those windows were going anywhere.

Mr. Brinkman stated that he was not sure if the neighbors were present at the hearing. He stated that one was for a bedroom and there was a small one in the bathroom. He stated that the others were in the stairwell. He stated that there was a six-foot fence that they will be facing.

Commissioner Cooper stated that he would be concerned about that and he asked that he talk to the neighbors to be sure they weren't putting something in that they don't like, adding that they don't want to hear that. He referred to the stairs, stating that they get really slippery and he asked

when they design the stairs that they make sure they put an anti-skid coating on it. He mentioned seeing a circular stairway coming down from the porch. He stated that having had a circular stairway with little kids himself, he suggested they put a fence on that circular stairway so the kids don't tumble down.

Mr. Brinkman understood.

Commissioner Stegink stated that there were a mass of trees at the back of the property, and he asked for confirmation that they were staying.

Mr. Brinkman responded affirmatively.

Chair Nibbelin opened the Public Hearing.

Nancy Murphy, 112 Vallecito, stated that she was the oldest member of the block, stating that her family bought the house in 1952. She acknowledged that the house has been that way from the beginning, and they were all shoehorned in and it would be nice for them to do what they would like and make a nice house for their family. She didn't have any complaints and thought it was time to improve the block.

David Goodwin, 112 Vallecito, stated that he approved of the changes they are making. He thought it would be a good improvement for the block and definitely a safety issue as the driveway is really steep and this would be a very good improvement.

Jeff Strobel, 107 Vallecito, stated that he has lived next door for about 30 years. He agreed the driveway was a bit of an issue. He was thinking about the width and was something that comes into play on a regular basis. He stated that with the driveways with some of the newer vehicles, they stop in the street before they get to the driveway. He thought a little extra room in a driveway would be beneficial as far as that part goes. He stated that when opening your door in the driveway with the landscaping, depending on how it is set up, it can't always be opened all the way unless they stop in the street. He agreed it was a fairly steep driveway. He stated that he backed their car out of the garage to pick them up at the airport, using their car because of the car seat for the baby, and he had to do it carefully. He stated that they also have a bit of a slope to their driveway and they have to be careful. He stated that they had a unique cul-de-sac. He stated that all those lots were probably close to being nonconforming by today's standards. He thought his was one of the houses that did get an addition put on plus several others. He thought it was fair for these applicants to have the opportunity to do an addition to fit in with what everyone else has done. He thought they kept things in order without looking at big giant boxes as in other parts of Vallemar and he thought it adds to the character of the street. He was not aware of anyone on the block that has said anything negative about the proposed project.

Chair Nibbelin closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Cooper liked the design and thought it was a nice design for the property. He looked at Google maps to look at the overall perspective of this house compared to the other houses, and it seems to be in line with the house next door as far as the overall footprints are concerned. He stated that he had some architectural issues that he was concerned with, mentioning that the house was built before Pacifica was incorporated and he concluded that he didn't see any problem with the project.

Commissioner Clifford likes the design of the house and was willing to go with the variance. He thought they have come up with some very good solutions to some very difficult problems.

Commissioner Stegink thought this was a minimal impact on the neighborhood and preserves the character. He felt it was a unique neighborhood and they were not making a massive blowout that will impact everyone's view and change the character forever. He was curious if other commissioners would be interested in waiving that 12-foot wide driveway to their initial request of 14 foot, 6 inches and whether staff thought they could do that without further notice.

Senior Planner Murdock thought they can. He stated that the issue was discussed in the condition of approval and the resolution and he felt comfortable if they were to delete condition #8 if that was the will of the Commission. They can simply update the resolution to indicate that the exception was granted for the driveway width as well.

Chair Nibbelin echoed what his fellow commissioners had to say. He thought it was an attractive proposal and he thought the staff report laid out clearly the rationale. He appreciated hearing from the neighbors who had thoughts to share on the proposal. He thought everything seems to be consistent with the look and feel of the community.

Commissioner Stegink moved that the Planning Commission finds the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act; APPROVES Site Development Permit PSD-820-17; Variance PV-518-17; and Parking Exception PE-172-18, by adopting the attached resolution, including conditions of approval in Exhibit A; and incorporates all maps and testimony into the record by reference with the omission of Condition #8 and including the provision of allowing a 14 foot, 6 inch wide driveway; Commissioner Clifford seconded the motion.

The motion carried **4-0**.

Ayes: Commissioners Stegink, Cooper, Clifford and  
Chair Nibbelin.

Noes: None

**CONSIDERATION:**

None

**COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS:**

Commissioner Clifford stated that the City Council unanimously approved the Commission's recommendation for the accessory dwelling unit ordinance without any changes.

Chair Nibbelin appreciated that Commissioner Clifford's flight arrived on time and he was able to make the meeting.

Commissioner Clifford stated that he was driving.

Commissioner Stegink asked staff if there was any public education campaign on ADUs.

Senior Planner Murdock stated that it was not something they have planned. He stated that the county-wide housing organization, 21 Elements, in which the City participates is putting together a comprehensive component on their website that will have information on ADUs. He thought, if and when the Council adopts the ordinance, their information will be a part of that. He stated that he reviewed the one page handout and it was something they can publicize in a Connect with Pacifica article and update the webpage.

Chair Nibbelin mentioned that there were a lot of housing related bills that the Governor signed and he was interested in knowing the impact of the totality of that legislative action on things going on in Pacifica that might be in the purview of the Commission.

Senior Planner Murdock stated that staff was also interested and they were looking for a quality summary. He thought it was overwhelming with the number and breadth of the bills. He stated that they can bring it forward either as an item for the Commission at a regular meeting or a study session.

**STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:**

Senior Planner Murdock stated that the new City Manager Kevin Woodhouse starts on Monday, and staff was excited to have him aboard. He stated that the final supplemental environmental impact report for the Fassler condominium project was posted on the Planning Department webpage on the environmental document section. He stated that staff will be sending an email to the Commission with more information this week. He mentioned library planning opportunities for the public. On October 4, staff will be at the Pacifica's Farmer's Market with information on the library and the Library Advisory Committee is meeting on October 11.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business for discussion, Commissioner Cooper moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 p.m.; Commissioner Clifford seconded the motion.

The motion carried **4-0**.



Planning Commission Minutes

October 2, 2017

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Ayes: Commissioners Stegink, Cooper, Clifford and  
Chair Nibbelin

Noes: None

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Medina  
Public Meeting Stenographer

APPROVED:

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Planning Director Wehrmeister