

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, February 28, 2024 – 7:00 PM

Meeting Conducted Via In-Person and Video Recording is Archived on the City Website  
<https://www.ci.claremont.ca.us/government/city-council/watch-city-council-meetings>

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Neiuber called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT**

COMMISSIONER: CASTILLO, NEIUBER, PERRY, SPIVACK,  
ZIMMERMAN

**ABSENT**

COMMISSIONER: BENNETT, CERVERA,

**ALSO PRESENT**

Brad Johnson, Community Development Director; Christopher Veirs, Principal Planner; Eric Norris, Contract Planner; Melissa Sanabria, Administrative Assistant

**CEREMONIAL MATTERS, PRESENTATIONS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no ceremonial matters, presentations, or announcements.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

This item starts at 00:01:11 in the archived video.

Chair Neiuber invited public comment.

Administrative Assistant Sanabria announced that no written general public comment had been received. Five written public comments were received for Item 2.

There were no requests to speak.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

This item starts at 00:03:11 in the archived video.

Chair Neiuber invited public comment.

There were no requests to speak.

1. Architectural Commission meeting minutes of February 14, 2024

Approved and filed the Architectural Commission meeting minutes of February 14, 2024.

***Commissioner Castillo moved to approve the Consent Calendar, seconded by Commissioner Perry; and carried on by roll call vote as follows:***

**AYES:** Commissioner – Castillo, Neuber, Perry, Spivack, Zimmerman

**NOES:** Commissioner – None

**ABSENT:** Commissioner – Bennett, Cervera

**PUBLIC HEARING**

This item starts at 00:04:25 in the archived video.

2. Advisory Review of Development Standards and Design Guidelines of the La Puerta School Site Specific Plan (LPSSSP) and Associated Draft Environmental Impact Report

Contract Planner Norris gave a PowerPoint presentation and responded to questions from the Commission regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) process, the completed traffic study, Z-lot configurations, prewiring for EV charging stations, solar panels, home types, density, staff concerns, zoning, lot sizing and configurations, concrete roof tiles, vinyl windows, Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR), and community access to Forbes Avenue and the La Puerta Sports park.

Principal Planner Veirs provided additional information about the traffic study, location of Z-lots, prewiring for solar, and density.

Chair Neuber invited the Applicant to make a presentation.

Eric Nelson, (Trumark Homes, Applicant), shared an oral presentation and responded to questions from the Commission regarding the amount of lots in the 4,000 square foot range, concrete roof tiles, connection to the Thompson Creek Trail and La Puerta Sports Park, parking for the trail and park, and if alternatives to vinyl windows were considered.

Chair Neuber invited public comment.

Steve Goldwater shared concerns regarding the zoning change, lot sizes, setbacks, home height, and how the proposed architectural styles do not fit with the General Plan. He urged the City and Commission to use the development along Baseline Road in Upland as an example of what this development will look like. Finally, he voiced concern for overnight parking.

Paul Wheeler shared his belief the school district made a mistake by selling the lot and that the project will change the sense of community. He agreed with previous grading comments and shared his hope that an increase in density will not occur.

Lynn Westfahl expressed fire safety concerns due to the project's density, lack of space between buildings, proximity to the hills, and single entrance and exit. She suggested placing a second exit on Miramar Avenue and urged the City to pay serious attention to this matter. She also shared that the design is not compatible with the surrounding area, wondered why there is no project signage on Indian Hill Boulevard, and spoke to confusion about site acreage and the sale price of La Puerta.

Rick Williams voiced concerns regarding the Specific Plan not containing a comprehensive site plan and how the design standards reviewed by the Architectural Commission would change if the number of units were increased. He also shared his belief that the zoning change for this area is incorrect.

Lauren McKenna opened by noting her concern about housing affordability and that she was a YIMBY. She then shared that the site's zoning should remain Public and the land should be used to serve the public. She voiced concerns about the lack of openness, project creativity, and suggested alternative uses for the site. She stressed that the site should be able to accommodate stormwater and rainfall. Finally, she asked the Commission to keep in mind the Chaparral ecosystem and fire safety.

Joyce Sauter expressed concerns about the high density, lack of parks or green areas, and single entrance and exit. The single exit will connect to a two-lane residential street, which will result in emergency access problems. She urged the project to be built elsewhere, as it does not fit with the long-existing Claremont neighborhoods.

Judy Moyer shared her appreciation for the community and the neighborhood's existing homes. She explained that the Applicant had changed the design, which doubled the height of the proposed homes. She voiced concern for the design's lack of a community feel, obstructed mountain views, and how the development will resemble the high-density development in Upland.

Eric Johnson explained that homes are a family's biggest investment, which is why the community is emotionally invested in this project. He shared his belief that too many homes are being proposed and his opposition for the need of revitalization. He stated that the community could collaborate with the Applicant if they are open to listening to neighborhood concerns.

Aaron provided information about concrete tiles' sustainability, ability to withstand weather damage, longevity, fire resistance, reflectability, lack of known mold issues, and warranty availability. He also provided the example of a fire in Covina, where fire trucks had difficulty accessing the area due to a single entrance and exit.

Art Wright wondered how the school district was able to sell public assets that are paid with taxpayer money. Residents should be involved with deciding property use and suggested alternative uses such as expanding the park or creating a community garden. He encouraged Claremont citizens to stop this development, as it poses fire danger, has limited access, will increase traffic and noise, and bring dust to the area.

Robert Fine asked that the Commission and Applicant to address if the City is exempt from the Builder's Remedy, if the Applicant will still build on this location no matter the vote outcome, and if the Commissioners would be in favor of the project if they lived on the corner of Forbes Avenue and Miramar Avenue.

Sharon Williams shared that the proposed architectural style in the current Specific Plan does not fit with the neighborhood. She asked that the Commission consider an alternative and different architectural style to be more consistent with the California Ranch style of the surrounding neighborhood.

Mason Prophet agreed with previous comments and shared concerns for Lot 40 on the southwest corner of the development, which will be the only home built up against existing residences. He stated that the new development will be seven feet higher on grade next to his neighbor's single-story home and that it will take away privacy, decrease property value, and diminish the quality of life for neighbors surrounding Lot 40.

There were no other requests to speak.

Chair Neiuber explained to the audience that all comments made will be shared with the Planning Commission and City Council. He further explained that the Architectural Commission will not be addressing the density and lot sizes, but instead will address the design and certain areas of the EIR. Chair Neiuber asked Principal Planner Veirs to address some of the questions brought up in public comment.

Principal Planner Veirs and Contract Planner Norris addressed comments regarding overnight parking, development standards, the Builder's Remedy, the plans, the preliminary process, emergency access, and density.

Mr. Nelson, Applicant, addressed Commissioner Spivack's questions about why other designs were not considered. Mr. Veirs provided further clarification regarding alternatives to vinyl windows that have similar energy performance.

Commissioner Zimmerman explained that the determining factor of the architectural style would be based on the lot size. He shared concerns about the proposed architecture fitting with the smaller size lots and suggested that using larger lots instead. Commissioner Zimmerman also shared his support for developing the land but felt that the small lots and proposed architectural styles do not fit with the neighborhood.

Commissioner Spivack shared her experiences with traffic at the location when it was the adult education school. She shared Mr. Prophet's concerns regarding Lot 40's impact on privacy and suggested that the unit be removed. Commissioner Spivack proposed alternate uses for the location as access to the park or small green space. She thanked Aaron for the information on concrete roof tiles and agreed with Mr. Veirs about vinyl windows. Commissioner Spivack also suggested that the side windows be staggered for added privacy and explore the possibility of incorporating Ranch or mid-century designs to better

fit the neighborhood. She explained that there is a need for more housing and that she appreciated the Specific Plan's attention to sustainability and EV and Solar Panel electric compliance.

Commissioner Perry thanked the public speakers for providing insight into the issues and challenges the community has with the project. He shared that the proposed housing is not complementary to surrounding development, which the Planning Commission and City Council will need to address. He appreciated the plan's diversity of design and also likes the idea of a mini-district that creates a small cluster of homes that differ from the surrounding homes. He then noted that the current lot size and lot pattern will lead to a form of housing that is different from its surroundings. He closed by noting that the Ranch and Mid-century modern design styles being requested by some neighbors was not realistic given the size and shape of the proposed lots.

Commissioner Castillo agreed with fellow Commissioners and raised concern for the Z-lots' appearance, which does not fit in Claremont. She would like to see larger lots with in the 5,500 square foot range, which would help address privacy concerns. She spoke in support of the eclectic architectural styles and wants them to continue to be single-family detached homes. Commissioner Castillo would like to remove the wording "where possible" from Section 4.5 of the Specific Plan under "corner lots" for one-story elements.

Chair Neiuber expressed that the proposed design is not compatible with the surrounding development, but that the Planning Commission and City Council will address that through their review of the map. He shared that the eaves on the Craftsman-style homes need to be at least two feet and he does not support using vinyl fences. He suggested using fieldstone where architectural stacked stone is proposed to reflect the style of the community. He also explained that Spanish-style homes need casement windows instead of double-hung windows, as casement windows are a character-defining feature. Chair Neiuber offered other sustainable window options instead of vinyl windows, such as wood, fiberglass, or wood composite; all of which can be painted and are easier to replace than vinyl. He suggested that the Applicant look at a different architectural style that will be more compatible with the neighborhood.

Commissioner Zimmerman suggested providing more of a connection to the La Puerta Sports Park and Thompson Creek Trail to the north and adding more green space and trees to the development.

Commissioner Spivack asked that more attention be placed on Lot 40. Chair Neiuber agreed with Commissioner Castillo's comments about using single-story homes or changing the setback for that area. Principal Planner Veirs offered guidance for the Commission to include a general rule regarding adequate buffers at the southwest corner lot and alternative suggestions for increased privacy.

Commissioner Spivack added her concern regarding the single entrance and exit to the development and suggested the Applicant explore having a second entrance at the northeast corner.

Contract Planner Norris responded to the concern by noting that the entrance and exit has been discussed through the review of the project and the Fire Department did not take issue with a single entrance and exit; however, it is something that could be explored further.

Commissioner Perry spoke about the Z-lot design noting that it provides more usable outdoor space within the interior of the development. Other higher density projects have not incorporated enough outdoor space, so he suggested exploring other ideas to optimize the outdoor space.

Principal Planner Veirs asked the Commission for clarification on how many were in favor of the Z-lot design, as staff also expressed concerns with this design. He offered that by setting back every other garage behind the house, Z-lots break up the monotony of the garage presence on the street.

Commissioner Castillo asked for clarification on the Z-lot locations and shared that she did not oppose the Z-lots if they were contained to the interior sites of the development.

Contract Planner Norris directed the Commission to the Specific Plan's Development Regulations table, which clarifies the locations of the Z-lots and that conventional lots are required on Forbes Avenue.

Chair Neiuber addressed the Applicant and provided clarification regarding the compatibility of form with surrounding development, which is one of the twelve general review criteria that the Commission reviews to approve projects under Claremont Municipal Code 16.300.060.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS – NONE**

This item starts at 02:17:21 in the archived video.

## **REPORTS**

This item starts at 02:17:33 in the archived video.

### **Commission**

#### **Commissioner Comments**

The Commissioners discussed the new bus stop on the corner of Bonita Avenue and Indian Hill Boulevard. Mr. Veirs provided updates on the installation schedule of the remaining bus stops.

Commissioner Perry explained that continued support is needed for the landscape along Foothill Boulevard, with a specific focus on the addition of trees. Principal Planner Veirs

suggested that Commissioner Perry contact Community Services Director Swan and offered to help set up a meeting.

Staff Briefing on Council Meetings

Principal Planner Veirs reported on items of interest from the previous City Council meetings. Commissioner Spivack suggested that the Chamber camera use a slightly larger view of Chambers to see more of the speakers, including City Council members.

Briefings on Other Items

There was no additional report.

Upcoming Agendas and Events

Principal Planner Veirs described the item expected to come before the Commission at the March 13, 2024 meeting.

The Commission discussed whether Architectural Commission members would attend the upcoming Planning Commission meeting regarding the Cultural Preservation Ordinance.

Commissioner Bennett shared that he will be out of town for the next meeting. Commissioner Spivack inquired about how far in advance absences should be shared.

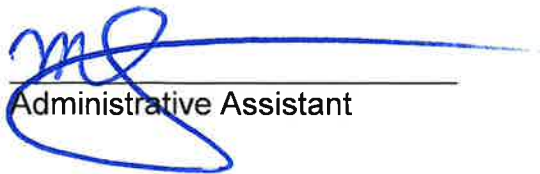
**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Neuber adjourned the meeting at 9:27 PM



Chair

ATTEST:



Administrative Assistant