

## **MOTION**

Moved by Council Member \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by Council Member \_\_\_\_\_, that upon review and consideration of all documents, materials and exhibits relative to the appeal of the Design Review Board's (DRB) approval of Design Review Board Case No. PDR 20004770, located at 1248 Corona Drive (the "Design Review Case"), and after having conducted a public hearing on the appeal on December 8, 2020 pursuant to the Glendale Municipal Code, 1995 ("GMC"), and receiving testimony, the Council of the City of Glendale, California, based upon all of the evidence in the record, hereby **REVERSES** the Design Review Board's decision and **DENIES** the Design Review Case. In reversing the DRB's decision and denying the Design Review Case, the Council makes the findings set forth below.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Design Review Case is a request by the Applicant to construct a new two-story, 2,299 square-foot, single-family dwelling with an attached 545 square-foot, two-car garage on a vacant, 8,889 square-foot lot, zoned R1R (FAR District III) with an average current slope of approximately 70%. The subject site is a vacant lot in the Adams Hill neighborhood with an up-sloping topography that steeply ascends from the western property line along Corona Drive to the rear property line. Surrounding the subject site are other R1R zoned properties with existing single-family dwellings to the east and west, and vacant lots to the north and south. The Design Review Board approved the Design Review Case, with conditions, on May 28, 2020. The Appellant appealed the Design Review Case on June 15, 2020.

## **FINDINGS**

Under GMC Section 30.47.030, the design review authority has the authority to review projects "to ensure compatibility with surrounding development in terms of size, scale, bulk/mass, roofline orientation, setbacks, and site layout." Additionally, the Hillside Development Review Policy encompassed in GMC Section 30.11.040A requires the City Council to take the following into consideration when making discretionary decisions with respect to development in the R1R zones such as the

subject property:

- a. Development shall be in keeping with the design objectives in the Glendale Municipal Code, the hillside design guidelines and the landscape Guidelines for hillside development as now adopted and as may be amended from time to time by city council.
- b. Development shall be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood in terms of size, scale, bulk/mass, roofline orientation, setbacks, and site layout.
- c. Site plans shall show preservation of prominent natural features, native vegetation and open space in a manner compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, minimizing alteration of terrain necessary for development.
- d. Site plans for development of property on steep slopes shall take into account the visual impact on surrounding properties.
- e. The architectural style and architectural elements of in-fill development shall be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

The hillside design guidelines are encompassed in the City's Comprehensive Design Guidelines. The City Council finds that the proposed project is inconsistent with the provisions of the GMC cited above and the Comprehensive Design Guidelines for the reasons set forth below.

**Mass and Scale:** The proposed massing and scale of the project are not compatible with the surrounding neighborhood:

The Comprehensive Design Guidelines provide that the mass and scale of a new proposal should be appropriate, transition well to the existing context and should relate to the predominant neighborhood pattern or massing configuration. Although the dwelling is proposed to be built into the upslope side of the property and the second story steps back from the first story, the proposed structure is 82 feet wide and 34 feet above the street line creating a monumental appearance from the street and adjacent properties. The proposed house is out of scale to the predominant neighborhood pattern of homes in the neighborhood, which are predominantly one story above street

line. In addition, the other homes in the immediate area are approximately 50 feet in width whereas the proposed home is 82 feet wide.

**Site Planning:** The proposed site planning is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Design Guidelines. “When building on the hillsides in Glendale, it is important to modify the landform as little as possible when building a new structure or addition. Grading and construction of retaining walls should be minimized.” In addition, [u]se of large retaining walls to flatten portions of the site is strongly discouraged.” (§1.6.12.) Yet, the proposed project consists of massive, 25-foot tall retaining walls, one of which will be approximately 87 feet long, as well as grading of over 1,000 cubic yards to support the construction of the home. This is inconsistent with the purpose of the Guideline to minimize alteration of landform and minimization of retaining walls.

Vote as follows:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain: