

Board Votes to Not Support Small Lot Subdivision on Parkman Avenue

After receiving numerous emails and calls from community members, at its monthly meeting on September 7, the SLNC Governing Board voted to oppose a proposed nine-unit, small-lot project at 738-742 Parkman Avenue. The vote was four yes, nine no and one recusal by a board member who left the room during voting. The project was initially recommended for approval by the Urban Design and Planning Committee, which submitted the motion to support the development and worked with the developer, Square One, to address community concerns, such as removing stairwell coverings (“doghouses”); reconfiguring landscaped areas to include guest parking; and planting replacement trees along Parkman. Square One also agreed that if the property were to be sold before construction, a covenant would be included that agreed-upon design changes would be adhered to by any future owner.

Board members and a number of residents who attended the meeting expressed concerns about the potential impact of more students on local schools, noise from roof decks, and the size of the project. In the end, the board voted to not recommend the project.

Following is a summary of agreements made at meetings with residents and developer and reported at Urban Design Committee meetings.

738-742 Parkman

Agreement between group of neighbors and developer on September 7:

- Remove stairwell coverings to the roof (aka “doghouses”) to reduce height and restores lost views
- Add two guest parking spaces
- Plant replacement trees for oak tree (or retain oak tree) in front yard to improve neighbors’ views
- Create covenant inside Purchase and Sale agreement requiring above design conditions (in the event the developer would sell the property)
- Consider changing tile design
- Shrink roof decks to one half the roof size, all facing the interior, and set back from adjoining properties

Agreement reached at August 10 Urban Design meeting:

- Retain the historic arroyo stone wall – except for driveway
- Mandate landscape features along the alleyway including vines and small trees

- Upgrade wrought iron work
- Use permeable paving in turn-around space

Agreements at small meetings with developer:

- Abide by more restrictive proposed City Code Amendments for small lot subdivisions, except guest parking and roof decks (both agreed to on September 7)
- Will listen to SLNC as to where to plant replacement trees

Not agreed to and why (what the City of Los Angeles allows):

- Situate units at average prevailing setback per City Design Guidelines. The average of zero-foot setbacks with those greater than 20 feet is approximately 20 feet which is the proposed setback.
- Reduce scale and massing; add open space. Proposal is at a 1.27:1 floor area ratio whereas a 3:1 floor area ratio is permitted.
- Decrease height: Removing “doghouses” reduces height by nine feet to 30 feet which is two feet taller than the adjacent building; maximum allowable height is 36 feet plus a doghouse; across the alley a unit is two stories over a garage with no roof deck.
- Disallow roof decks – the City permits developers of small lots to consider open decks and roof decks to meet the open space requirement – without roof decks units would have to be taller for the same square footage in order to increase open space.
- Reduce number of units, downsize by half; reduce square footage— Current City Code allows 10 units on the property; developers are proposing nine units; bedrooms already are small – they want three per unit – most often utilized as two bedrooms and an office.
- Keep views – Removing doghouses and putting landscaping next to the alley helps; City doesn’t assure views.