

# Spotlight on Urban Design and Planning Committee

Nineteen committees support the work of the Silver Lake Neighborhood Council, tackling diverse topics ranging from helping wildlife to adopting historic stairways. The Urban Design and Preservation Committee (UDPC) reviews and advises on land use issues in Silver Lake, addressing some of the community's most high profile concerns. Scott Plante, who co-chairs UDPC with Joe Ferrell, explains how the committee functions—and why the work can be challenging.

## **What Is the Urban Design and Planning Committee?**

The Urban Design and Preservation Committee is a part of the Silver Lake Neighborhood Council. We review and advise on land use issues in our community. We do not review all projects built in Silver Lake—only those that trigger a public hearing by the LA City Planning Department. We are an advisory committee. Our recommendations are not binding, but they are considered by City Planning when a project is reviewed.

## **What are the biggest challenges?**

The biggest challenges are separating fact from emotion and helping people fully understand the issues. The committee's job is to support the community by using our knowledge base to understand the big picture. The growth Silver Lake is experiencing can trigger strong feelings on both sides of a project. Our goal is to work with residents and stakeholders to develop thoughtful and objective recommendations.

## **How does UDPC work?**

First the applicant asks to be placed on the agenda for an upcoming meeting, which will be open to the public. If the committee recommends a project for approval, it is forwarded to the full Silver Lake Neighborhood Council (SLNC) for further review. If the project is recommended by the SLNC, a letter noting that support is forwarded to City Planning.

If the UDPC Committee does not recommend a project, the decision is sent to the Neighborhood Council where it is noted and a letter of non-recommendation is sent to City Planning.

If the project generates a large number of comments from residents, such as the proposed development at 2468 Glendale Boulevard, the UDPC may recommend community meetings be held.

## **Why does UDPC have voting members and non-voting members?**

The UDPC addresses serious projects, from proposed developments to changes in a businesses' operating hours. Voting members ensure the committee is responsible and objective. If all people who attend a UDPC meeting could vote, people for or against a specific proposal could flood a meeting and potentially skew the results. Also, this type of material requires a knowledge

base that is built up over time. You can't learn it in one meeting, where decisions can be impulsive and emotional.

**What kind of applications does UDPC review and approximately how many a year?**

The committee reviews approximately two applications a month from applicants who are requesting some type of variance. At the next UDPC meeting on April 12, the [committee](#) is scheduled to review the renewal of an existing beer and wine license at the Lyric Theatre.

**After the committee reviews an application, what are the next steps?**

See [http://silverlakenc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/SLNC-Applicant-Guidelines\\_2017\\_01.pdf](http://silverlakenc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/SLNC-Applicant-Guidelines_2017_01.pdf) for a thorough explanation.

**Co-chair Bios**

Scott Plante has lived in Silver Lake in 2009. An architect interested in urban design, he became interested in SLNC's Urban Design and Preservation Committee in 2010, while pursuing a repair project for the Micheltorena Street Stairway. He is the co-chairman of the committee and a practicing architect in Los Angeles, concentrating in higher education work.

Joe Ferrell is a Los Angeles native, born and raised in Glendale, and moved to the Silver Lake area in 2013. A local development led Joe to the Urban Design and Preservation Committee where his love affair with urban planning and public service was established. Shortly after, he achieved a master's in public policy from USC and began a career in urban planning and consulting. Since then, Joe has worked in Mayor Garcetti's office, consulted on political campaigns, and served on the Silver Lake Neighborhood Council for two years (2014-2016) and continues to serve as the co-chair on the Urban Design and Preservation Committee.