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Summary of Carlson Park Listening Workshop Comments

Date: September 14, 2018
 Re: Carlson Park Listening Workshop Summary
 Location: Culver City Senior Center, Room B47, 4095 Overland Avenue, Culver City, California, 90230

On July 24, 2018, from 6:30 PM to 8:20 PM, a community meeting was held at the Culver City Senior Center to discuss single family development in the Carlson Park neighborhood. John Kaliski Architects (JKA), with City Staff input, heard feedback from residents about their vision and concern for future development in their neighborhood.

Community members who attended included:

- Stefani Ames
- Peter Baxendale
- Susannah Baxendale
- Louis Block
- Marilyn Burns
- Chuck Daila
- DiAnn Davis
- Roseanne Di Gregorio
- George Dougherty
- Jan Ginther
- Lee Hanson
- Kay Heinemun
- Matt Howell
- Andrew Leist
- Philip Lelyued
- Amy Levit
- Aaron Moss
- Rosa Moss
- Lisette Palley
- Norman Palley
- Hope Parres
- Dennis Parrish
- Jody Reichel
- Ellen Renga
- Robert Renga
- Judy Richter
- Jon Riddle
- Sarah Riddle
- Barbara Silverstein
- Anita Skaden
- Kipp Skaden
- Pete Stern
- Michael Teofai
- Susan Tillerson

Staff and consultants that attended included:

- City of Culver City, Current Planning Division: Michael Allen, Susan Herbertson, Deborah Hong
- City of Culver City, Advanced Planning Division: Brent Oltz
- JKA: John Kaliski, Carolyn Matsumoto

A fifty-minute survey exercise was conducted with the group as a whole. The survey exercise consisted of twenty site photographs of Carlson Park. The group voted with red and green cards to indicate their “like” or “dislike” of each photograph. A second twenty-minute community comment exercise followed which gave participants the opportunity to share their interests/concerns and to describe what works and doesn’t work in their neighborhood.

Survey Exercise Findings

1. Existing standards for side yard setbacks at the first floor and setbacks at the second floor are not adequate to provide light, air, and privacy to neighboring properties.

The original tract development of Carlson Park placed garages in the rear yard northwest of Farragut Drive and placed side-facing garages in the front yard southeast of Farragut Drive. The driveways leading to both garage configurations provide default open space and side yard setbacks from neighboring properties, with 10-foot driveways along side yards and 30-foot driveways for side-facing garages. Repeatedly, residents expressed disapproval towards new construction built to the five (5) foot setback standard at both side yards. Concerns included:

- a. The loss of light, air, and privacy when two-story construction is built adjacent to one-story homes, especially where windows or balconies appear to “look into” adjacent lots.
- b. Change of neighborhood character from single-family residential to multi-family residential when homes of similar style and materials (sometimes built by the same developer) are built to the maximum floor area ratio (FAR) and zoning envelope and are adjacent to one another.

2. Strong dislike for front facing garages, which indicate homes built to minimum required side yard setbacks.

Consistently, houses with front facing garages were voted with red cards. Front facing garages were not a garage configuration from the original tract development. New construction or remodels that utilize front facing garages are built to the five-foot side yard setback in order to make room for both the garage and entry and therefore tend to be larger and to loom over adjacent properties. Correspondingly, residents were more tolerant of large unmodulated two-story homes that maintained the original side-facing garage or driveway configurations, as they maintained more open space, greater setbacks, and mitigated the sense of looming over adjacent properties.

3. Strong dislike of New Tradition style homes for being over-scaled and developer-driven.

Residents unanimously voted dislike for a two-story New Traditional style home despite it maintaining a rear yard garage with a 10-foot driveway along the side yard setback. A series of New Traditional homes, called Modern Farmhouse by developers, have been built and continue to be built in Carlson Park. One resident noted, “I’m not against two-story houses but I am against two-stories of a version that should be quaint. A modern house is so much more acceptable than this house, which is blown out. It looks like a farmhouse that just got gargantuan. It’s a style that is inappropriate for that size of house.” The continued construction of similar houses that maximize the FAR and “flipped” is upsetting for residents. “I live in fear that my neighbors are going to sell and a developer will come in and build a huge inappropriate house. The flippers are ruining the neighborhood.”

4. Split opinion of modern style homes with flat rooflines.

Residents were split on their like/dislike of modern style homes with flat rooflines. While reviewing a single story contemporary home with a flat roof overhang, one resident noted, “It doesn’t bother me when there are ten different styles. I wouldn’t like it if everything was the same style.” Conversely, another resident responded, “It’s so modern. Maybe it’s because of the flat roof. It doesn’t fit in the neighborhood.” Overall, residents were more inclined to vote favorably for modern style homes with flat rooflines if they maintained the rear yard garage, side yard driveway, and if they were modulated at the second story.