

## Appeal of 349 E. California Blvd., PLN2015-00702

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This project has only received staff review due its size and has had NO public meetings to review through the Design Commission process. Therefore, environmental review through this Zoning process is the only forum to consider relevant land use and planning and aesthetic impacts. Attempts to raise this issues at the only public hearing, held to discuss the creation of three air parcels in place of the existing single air parcel were not successful due to the fact that only the subject of air parcels was under review by the Hearing Officer.

In raising the issue of CEQA review, it is NOT the intention to reject the development of this parcel from multi-family units, because 349 E. California is zoned RM-16. The intention of raising the relevant sections of CEQA is to allow further review of the impact this three story, three unit building with a subterranean garage will have on Pasadena's historic resource, the English Tudor bungalow court at 545 South Euclid Avenue, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and advertised as "Euclid Court" in the "Historic Pasadena Walking & Driving Tours" brochure, Driving Tour of bungalow Courts section.

The intention of this document is to allow for appropriate study to yield the mitigation measures that might very well be appropriate redesign/design improvements to the proposed project.

Thank you.

The project submitted at 349 East California Boulevard is in violation of the following sections of the California Environmental Quality Act that relate to land use and historic resources, specifically sections: 21084(c); 21084.1; 5020.1(k); and 15064.5.

### *Background*

We are requesting further study on a potential new development on the corner of California and Euclid. The site of this three story, three unit building is next to a bungalow court, 545 Euclid Avenue, which is on the National Register of Historic Places and identified on the City of Pasadena Planning & Community Development's "Historic

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Pasadena Walking & Driving Tours brochure as #3 on the "Bungalow Courts Driving Tour" as Euclid Court. As the approved plans are currently drawn, the massing of the building is pushed away from California Boulevard to the rear of the lot, which is the property line of the historically protected, single story bungalow court. We request that further review of the impact of a structure of this height and size be studied and that the installation of **STORY POLES** with material to indicate massing be placed to further show the negative impact that this building will have on the sunlight and air flow to the historic bungalows. We also want to determine the impact the proposed tree removals will have on the adjacent structures. We cite several CEQA statute sections that pertain to this request.

CEQA 21084 List of Exempt Classes of Projects; Projects Damaging Scenic Resources  
"(c) A project that may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcropping, or similar resources..." and

"(e) A project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource..."

The project developers have not been required to submit an environmental review. The project has only received staff review and no public design review through the Design Commission process. Therefore, environmental review through this zoning process is the only forum to determine the appropriateness of the project in terms of land use and aesthetic impacts. We submit that the project will adversely affect the adjacent historical

structures. The site for the three-story, three unit building is relatively small, and the project would dominate the historically protected bungalow court. The staff approved this three-story project with a mere 10' setback from the property line abutting the single story bungalows. If allowed to proceed without further review and the placement of story poles, it is unclear to what extent the project will loom over the bungalow court. In addition, with removal of old trees, the project will forever alter this historic resource that is so characteristic of Pasadena homes.

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#### CEQA 15042 Authority to Disapprove Projects

"A public agency may disapprove a project if necessary in order to avoid one of more significant effects on the environment that would occur if the project were approved as proposed."

This section gives the City the authority to stop this project based on the fact that it will disproportionately mass over the existing single story bungalows on the property line of the project. The loss of sunlight, privacy and air flow will be permanent and unalterable once this structure is built as it is currently designed.

#### CEQA 15064 Determining the Significance of the Environmental Effects Caused by a Project

"(a) Determining whether a project may have a significant effect plays a critical role in the CEQA process."

"(c) In determining whether an effect will be adverse or beneficial, the Lead Agency shall consider the views held by members of the public in all areas affected as expressed in the whole record before the lead agency. "

We propose that there has been insufficient determination what effect the project will have, and we are those members of the public expressing their deep concerns about the appropriateness of this project as it is currently designed. This pertains particularly to the effects major changes to light and air and the removal of trees will have on nearby structures. Further study, including story poles with material attached, will help clarify whether the building is correct in size and scale for its location.

It is important to note that this is the first opportunity the public has had to air its concerns about the proposed development. The fact that this building is three units allows staff to proceed without bringing it before the Design Commission, which would have been the correct venue to discuss the many concerns surrounding this project as it is currently designed.

#### CEQA 15064.5 Determining the Significance of Impacts to Archeological and Historical Resources

"(a) For purposes of this section, the term "historical resources" shall include the following: (1) A resource listed in, or determined to be eligible by the State Historical

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Resources Commission, for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (Pub. Res. Code Section 5024.1, title 14 CCR, Section 4850 et seq.)

This bungalow court is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and as such meets the criterion laid out in this section.

"...Generally, a resource shall be considered by the Lead Agency to be 'historically significant' if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources (Pub. Res. Code Section 5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4852) including the following: ...(C) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, ..."

The bungalow court at 545 South Euclid Avenue is laid out with front yards and pathways that are harmonious to its lot, and the exteriors of the bungalows are constructed with a level quality and detail that is extremely hard and expensive to replicate. As such, measures must be taken to protect the historic significance of this bungalow court and keep new construction from ruining its sight lines, sunlight, privacy and air flow.

*Review of the facts as presented by the Planning and Community  
Development Department*

In the April 26, 2016 letter to Tom Lau, AIA, written by Leon White, Principal Planner, Design & Historic Preservation Section of the Planning & Community Development Department, a statement is made that due to the size of the proposed construction being less than nine units, it is "subject to Director level review." The neighbors to this project strenuously object to this standard because many of the lots along California are small and cannot physically accommodate more than nine units without being combined with neighboring properties. The section of California between Lake and Marengo is a mix of various single and multi-family residential units, with the larger, more recently built (1960-70's) massive structures built on a combination of single family lots. In the time when this type of destruction of quaint homes forever altering neighborhoods was allowed, scant care or review was evidently given to the architectural style and quality of construction that was allowed, and it has forever changed the character of the street.

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This appeal has been filed by its neighbors who want to stand up for the remaining structures before they are forever demolished in favor of denser, lesser quality design and construction that could be in place for the next 100 years.

The letter further states "...the design of the project is consistent with the purposes of design review and the applicable design guidelines..." We strongly question with which existing buildings the design is consistent. The only other building that is "French Eclectic" is diagonally across the street, located on what used to be three single family home lots. Nowhere else does this "French Eclectic" design style exist on California or within a one mile radius. As such, it will be out of character with the rest of the street, as well as jarringly different in scale and appearance with its west and north property neighbors. Instead of one uncharacteristic building, there would be two. We are reluctant to encourage developers to replicate newer construction that is already out of keeping with Pasadena's historic beauty.

As previously mentioned, the north property line neighbor is a historically protected bungalow court that is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places. According to Mr. White, this "French Eclectic" architectural style is compatible with the English Tudor architectural style. Perhaps, although given the distinct difference in styles, and the specific details of the design proposed at this location, it will not match or even harmonize with the quality of the materials used on its immediate property line neighbors: The 1907 bungalow on its west, and the 1921 English Tudor bungalow court on its north. The fact that cannot be reasoned away is the dramatic difference in scale, massing and height that will exist if the building is allowed to be built as planned and described. It is as Chris Holden once told said in reference to the appropriateness of constructing artificial turf soccer fields in Hahamonga Watershed Park, "It is like wearing tennis shoes with a tuxedo; you can, but should you?"

### *Massing and Siting*

The report states that "...the building graduates in height from two to three stories of massing, with the three-story massing located toward the rear portion of the lot." Ironically, the rear portion of the lot is the neighboring English Tudor style bungalow court that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In fact, it will loom over its neighbors, because the lot is not large enough for more than a 10 foot setback to create the number and size of units that make the project pencil out. The current plan will not allow for daylight, airflow and a natural plant material privacy hedge to shield the existing historic bungalow homes from the physical intrusion of this

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massive (for the size of its lot) new construction. So by allowing this project to go forward as designed, while it may meet code requirements, it will certainly create an out-of-scale development that will not harmonize with its historic neighbors. The analogy of 10 pounds of flour in a five pound sack fits in this situation.

The report further states that the proposed three-story maximum height is consistent with the surrounding multi-family zoned properties. In fact, there is only one four-story building on the north side of California between Marengo and Euclid, and it is a massive block-style building devoid of architectural details, hidden only by four ficus benjamina trees. If they were to succumb to disease or drought like the ficus nitida trees on Green Street from Holliston Avenue to Hill Avenue, would leave a stark and unattractive structure. Where is the logic behind allowing a three-story building to be built on a lot one third the size of the three-story reference buildings on the southeast corner of Euclid Avenue and California Boulevard? It will be out of scale with its neighbors, the historic single story bungalow built in 1907, the same year as the existing single story home to the immediate west of this proposed building, and the single story bungalow homes on the north, or "rear" property line.

### *Materials & Colors*

This building will have a metal roof. Only two other properties along California between Lake and Marengo have a metal roof detail, many blocks east of the proposed project (703 California and 650 California.) The building that is diagonally across the street, which Mr. White has mentioned is the reference for the architectural style of the proposed building, has a shingled roof.

The insulfoam trim that is to delineate the second and third floors & covered with stucco is problematic from a sustainability factor: Stucco and insulfoam can chip and reveal interior building structure unless properly maintained. How long has this product been in use? Is Pasadena allowing the use of building materials that will not age well in the next 75 to 100 years, like the age of the neighboring properties on the west and north? Why would this less expensive building material be allowed in Pasadena, especially in the context of the two historic property neighbors on the west and north?

The stone detail is limited to the bottom 30" of the building, and will be virtually unnoticeable due to the hedging.

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The courtyards are small due to the limited size of the lot and the coverage of the building, rendering them all but useless as a design feature. The use of "courtyard" is a bit of a misnomer, as there is no plan for a water feature to compensate for the traffic noise that is a feature of this busy street.

### *Protected Tree Removals*

The removal of trees is breathtaking on this project. The letter from Mr. White to a representative of the applicant makes no mention of the Pasadena process that allows for public input on the removal of street trees. The plans seem to be approved to allow the removal of two majestic and healthy camphor street trees to allow access for the subterranean parking garage. The architect's T-1 "Tree Protection Plan" shows six trees identified as "tree #14". This is misleading at best.

The report states that the "City's (independent) arborist has found that there is no objective feature of tree #14 that makes it not suitable for protection." In fact, there are six trees identified as #14 on the existing site map. "As such if this tree is removed..." WHY would staff allow for the possibility that these trees be removed? If there is no objective feature of the trees identified as #14, why allow them to be removed? It may be because these trees are unremarkable species or in an inconvenient place, but we question this rationale. Why have a tree protection ordinance at all if it is not going to be followed? We have seen enough tree removals that allow for site redevelopment, including the removal of the Canary Island Palm trees at Twin Palms and the ficus trees on South Lake Street, to be wary of convenient exceptions to the tree ordinance. Have arborists been consulted to confirm that there is adequate space to allow the required replacement trees to properly grow to replicate the shade canopy of the existing trees? Given the size of the proposed building and its relatively small lot, it is unlikely that the canopies of replacement trees will be able to receive the sunlight and space it would take to become a significant feature of the site, as the existing trees currently are.

It is important to note that nowhere in the conditions in the Planning Department's letter to the applicant is the applicant's plan to remove the two majestic camphor street trees on Euclid Avenue. These trees are identified as to be removed on the architectural "Tree Protection Plan" identified as T-1, and revised three times, most

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recently on November 9, 2016. This needs to be fully explored in the public process designed to allow community members input, at publicly publicized Urban Forestry Advisory Committee meetings.

### *Conclusion*

The Conclusion of this report that the design is compatible in terms of massing, height, and architectural factually incorrect. While the staff may feel that it "...has worked with the architect to ensure appropriate detailing and improve its compatibility with its surroundings by incorporating quality materials...", this appeal was filed by many neighbors and the Madison Heights Neighborhood Association under the guidance of its Board of Directors that strongly disagree with this conclusion. As such, now is the time to point out that many statements made to justify the construction of a building this size in this small space are in fact illogical.

With no neighborhood input, the destruction of many less massive single and multi-family residences along Marengo between California and Glenarm has occurred. The smaller homes have been replaced by massive and architecturally unremarkable budget-friendly construction. The neighbors to 349 East California strongly feel that it is necessary to speak up and say that this practice must be carefully reconsidered before inalterable and permanent mistakes are made with increasing the density as allowed by code.

While there may in fact be two three-story multi-family buildings directly across the street from this site and west of this site, the reality is that both of those structures are on lots that are much, much larger than this lot. Therefore, the scale of the proposed building is inconsistent with its neighbors. The architectural style may have been chosen to better camouflage the fact that the structure must be three stories to pencil out, but that architectural style is only found in one location, and that location is again, on a much bigger lot than the proposed project.

We are concerned that the City of Pasadena staff or community volunteers will allow the destruction of a property that is much more harmonious to its 90+ year old single family homes, especially given that it abuts a bungalow court that is on the National Register of Historic Places. We worry that the City is clamoring to build multi-family housing that it will ruin the character and charm of its neighborhoods.



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Historically, no one has stood against the City in either the General Plan scoping process or at hearings on multi-family redevelopment projects in this eastern edge of District 6. In fact, this "Central District" is getting a lot, in many people's opinion too much, attention from residential developers. Citizens with either short- or long-standing ties to their hometown of Pasadena are waking up to the fact that they must, individually and collectively, speak up to protect the unique, historic and beautiful nature of Pasadena, the jewel in the crown of the San Gabriel Valley.

We ask that you consider the concerns described above and request that further review be performed. The installation of story poles with material is essential to understand the impact this new structure will have visually and physically on the neighboring properties, as well as to the environment of California Boulevard as a whole. A thorough review of the trees that the developer intends to remove should be performed by the city's Parks & Natural Resources Department. The Urban Forestry Advisory Committee should have the opportunity to investigate, discuss and hear from the public before these two majestic street trees are removed.

Thank you for your consideration.

①

# PETITION AND CONSENT

**FROM: PASADENA PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**SUBJECT: APPEAL OF THE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS DECISION ON TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP #073535-349 EAST CALIFORNIA BOULEVARD**

**APPEAL DATE: 07-17-2017, 7 P.M.**

**APPEAL LOCATION: Pasadena City Hall**

Pasadena is a renowned city rich in the abundance of diversity and culture, beautifully situated at the foot of San Gabriel Mountains. It is an honorable duty of every proud resident to protect and preserve its culture and beauty.

I, Jane Chen, purchased this 3-unit complex with an approved the permit in June 2016. I am applying for a TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP to create three individual parcels to facilitate separate sales of the units as condominiums. On 11/28/2016, the MADISON HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION filed an appeal due to impacts to the surrounding environment. Specifically, increase of traffic in a congested area and deterioration of the aesthetic appearance of the street".

I did some research and their grounds for objections are unfounded.

1, The cars park on the Euclid St are from one of the 12 unit's apartment/552 S. Euclid Ave that only has one car port parking for each unit.

2, Right after behind my lot, there is an 8 - units of historical apartment was built in 1922. They look very elegant but there is no any parking garage. All the tenants have to park their cars on the street. I know we need to protect the house of the cultural value in Pasadena but it causing street parking difficult.

3, My project/ 3-unit's apartment is going to build 6 parking space in the basement. It will not increase traffic on Euclid Ave.

4, Within the neighborhood on California Blvd and Euclid Ave, there are many apartments and condos, single houses both newer and older. My 3-unit project is French style permitted by the Building and Safety Department in 2016. It will not cause the impact of Pasadena Cultural reserves.

I am looking for Pasadena residents to support my three separate parcels application on the appeal 7/17/2017. Thank you for your support!

Jane Chen

626-636-5851

Name	address	Group	Common
<i>Susan Hamilton</i>	<i>2211 Sinaloa Ave Altadena, CA</i>	<i>Awareness Center Yoga</i>	<i>I support Jane Chen.</i>
<i>Catherine Reiss McAniff</i>	<i>425 South Madison Avenue</i>	<i>student</i>	<i>I support Jane Chen</i>
<i>AMY LIU</i>	<i>1272 Wesley Ave, Pasadena, CA</i>	<i>friend</i>	<i>I support Jane Chen</i>

07/17/2017

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## PETITION AND CONSENT

**FROM:** Pasadena BOARD OF ZONING DEPARTMENT

**SUBJECT:** APPEAL OF HEARING OFFICER'S DECISION:

**TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP #073535-349 E CALIFORNIA BLVD, PASADENA/3 UNITS APARTMENT(CONDO)**

**APPEAL DATE:** 07-17-2017, 6 P.M.

**APPEAL LOCATION:**

I, Jane(Juifang) Chen purchased this 3-unit complex with an approved the permit in June 2016. I am applying for a TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP to create three individual parcels to facilitate separate sales of the units as condominiums. On 11/28/2016, the MADISON HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION filed an appeal due to impacts to the surrounding environment. Specifically, increase of traffic in a congested area and deterioration of the aesthetic appearance of the street".

I did some research and their grounds for objections are unfounded.

1, The cars park on the Euclid St are from one of the 12 unit's apartment that only has one carport parking for each unit.

2, My project/ 3-unit's apartment is going to build 6 parking space in the basement. It will not increase traffic on Euclid St.

3, Within the neighborhood on California Blvd and Euclid St, there are many apartments and condos, single houses both newer and older. My 3-unit project is French style permitted by the Building and Safety Department in 2016. It will not cause the impact of Pasadena Cultural reserves.

I am looking for Pasadena residents to support my three separate parcels application on the appeal 7/17/2017. Thank you for your support!

Jane(Juifang) Chen

Name	address	Group	Common
Shu Hua Chen	2429 Oneida St. unit 1 Pasadena, CA 91107	epicentre church	I do support.
Juang, Charline	1479 Locust St. #4 pasadena, CA 91106	Friend	"

## PETITION AND CONSENT

**FROM:** Pasadena BOARD OF ZONING DEPARTMENT

**SUBJECT:** APPEAL OF HEARING OFFICER'S DECISION:

**TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP #073535-349 E CALIFORNIA BLVD, PASADENA/3 UNITS APARTMENT(CONDO)**

**APPEAL DATE:** 07-17-2017, 6 P.M.

**APPEAL LOCATION:**

I, Jane(Juifang) Chen purchased this 3-unit complex with an approved the permit in June 2016. I am applying for a TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP to create three individual parcels to facilitate separate sales of the units as condominiums. On 11/28/2016, the MADISON HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION filed an appeal due to impacts to the surrounding environment. Specifically, increase of traffic in a congested area and deterioration of the aesthetic appearance of the street".

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I am looking for Pasadena residents to support my three separate parcels application on the appeal 7/17/2017. Thank you for your support!

Jane(Juifang).Chen.

Name	address	Group	Common
HSIN LEE	2429 Oneida ST. unit 2. Pasadena CA 91107	Friend	support
Hann-Wei Chang	Same "	"	support
Qi Hai Xia	2429 Oneida st. unit 1 Pasadena CA 91107	Friend	support
FRAN Schwegman	545 S MARENGO AVE #3	street Neighbor	SUPPORT

