

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Lisa Jacobs <
Sent: Friday, March 20, 2026 1:05 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Cc: Amanda Elioff
Subject: 511 S. Oak Knoll Ave. signatures to support appeal
Attachments: 511 S Oak Knoll appeal supporters.pdf

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Dear Pasadena City Council and staff,

Please find attached, signatures in support of the November 7, 2025 appeal of the concept design approval for 511 S. Oak Knoll Ave. from appellants Brian Fulcher and Amanda Elioff.

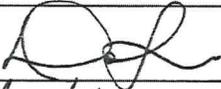
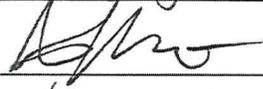
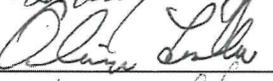
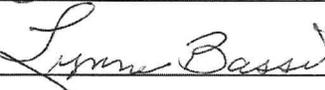
Hundreds of neighbors urge city council to approve the appeal.

We agree with the appeal based on these points:

- Oddly designed exterior hallways will create light pollution
- Redesigning with a more standard interior hallway adds square footage to units giving a better return on investment
- Giving a greater than five-foot setback allows more greenery to ensure gardens can be enjoyed by all
- Please do more to study environmental impacts from noise, light, traffic and parking
- Please do more to study nighttime noise from 46 air conditioning roof units
- Please devise a plan to accommodate more parked vehicles on Oak Knoll given lack of overnight parking

We, the undersigned, support the Fulcher/Elioff appeal and urge city council to send this project back to the drawing board.

I support the appeal of the Pasadena Design Commission's approval of 511 South Oak Knoll Ave Development and agree to be listed as a signatory.

No.	Name	Signature/Date	Address
1.	Donna Lee	 3/12/26	S. Oak Knoll Ave
2.	KEVAN Moscoso	 3/12/26	S. Oak Knoll Ave.
3.	Valerie Wilding	 3/14/26	S. Oak Knoll Ave. #6
4.	Randy Wong	 3/14/26	SO. OAK KNOLL AVE.
5.	Oleivia Luyllh	 3/14/26	So Oak Knoll Ave
6.	Anna Martinez	 3/18/26	S. Oak Knoll Ave, #
29	Lynne Bassis	 3/19/26	" #.

I support the appeal of the Pasadena Design Commission's approval of 511 South Oak Knoll Ave Development and agree to be listed as a signatory.

No.	Name	Signature/Date	Address
		3/14/20	E. California Blvd

Sign Here

I support the appeal of the Pasadena Design Commission's approval of 511 South Oak Knoll Ave Development and agree to be listed as a signatory.

No.	Name	Signature/Date	Address
	ANDREA BEESLEY	Andrea Beesley 3-13-26	S. OAK KNOLL # 91101 PAS
	Jesus Rodriguez	[Signature] 3/14/2026	SOakknoll #10 91101 Pasadena
	Adrienne Kelish	[Signature] 3/14/2026	S Oak knoll #10 91101 Pasadena
	Camilla Risom	[Signature] 3/14/2026	S. Oak Knoll Ave # 91101 Pasadena
	Isamine Pineda	[Signature] 3/14/2026	S Oak Knoll Ave # 91101 Pasadena
	Daniel Macedo	[Signature] 3/14/2026	S Oak Knoll Ave # 91101 Pasadena
	Deborah Tannenbaum	[Signature] 3/14/2026	S. Oak Knoll Ave # 91101 Pasadena
	Elizabeth Kelish	[Signature] 3-15-2026	S. Hudson Ave Pasadena 91106
	Elena Nikol.	[Signature] 3-15-2026	S Oak Knoll 91101
	GREG KELISH	[Signature] 3/16/26	S. HUDSON PASADENA 91106
	Yungja Park	[Signature] 3/16/26	S. Oak Knoll 91101

Thank you!
Lisa in #

Sign Here

I support the appeal of the Pasadena Design Commission's approval of 511 South Oak Knoll Ave Development and agree to be listed as a signatory.

No.	Name	Signature/Date	Address
	HAROLD HARRIGIAN	[Signature]	S. OAK KNOLL PAS 91101
	Sara Jane Bell	[Signature]	S. Oak Knoll Ave, Pasadena 91101
	Lynne Bassis	[Signature]	S. OAK KNOLL Pasadena 91101
	MIGUEL E. MEDRANO	[Signature] 3/14/26	S. OAK KNOLL - PAS 91101
	KEVIN MOSCOSO	[Signature]	S. OAK KNOLL 91101.
	DONNA MOSCOSO	[Signature]	S. oak knoll ave 91101
	Cybelle Suro	[Signature] 3/14/26	S. oak Knoll Ave PAS 91101
	HENRY MOSELEY	[Signature] 3/15/26	S OAK KNOLL AVE, PAS 91101
	Olive Moseley	[Signature] 3/15/26	S oak knoll ave, pas 91101
	Agnes Tong	[Signature] 3/16/21	S. Oak Knoll Ave 91101

Thank you!
Lisa in #

www.change.org/p/511-s-oak-knoll-is-too-big-too-boxy

petition_signatures_jobs_491060809_20260317223205

Name	City	State	Postal Code	Country	Signed On
Lisa Ann Jacobs				United States	2026-03-02
Amanda Elioff	pas	CA	90014	United States	2026-03-02
Nancy Petersen	Pasadena	CA	91101	United States	2026-03-02
Desiree Gill	Pasadena	CA	91107	United States	2026-03-02
Abbie Miller	Los Angeles	CA	90025	United States	2026-03-02
Verónica Cross	Monrovia	CA	91016	United States	2026-03-02
David Fairris	Pasadena	CA	91101	United States	2026-03-02
Brian Fulcher	Pasadena	CA	91101	United States	2026-03-02
Alessia Aguilar	Riverside	CA	92504	United States	2026-03-02
Mira Maatouk	Altadena	CA	91001	United States	2026-03-02
Wenda Friesner	Pasadena	CA	91101	United States	2026-03-02
Sandra Sinanian	Los Angeles	CA	90039	United States	2026-03-02
Alexis Estrada	Pasadena	CA	91107	United States	2026-03-02
Jose Pimentel	Azusa	CA	91702	United States	2026-03-02
Peri Corso	Los Angeles	CA	90028	United States	2026-03-02
William Olson	Pasadena	CA	91106	United States	2026-03-02
Rene Moreno	Burbank	CA	91501	United States	2026-03-02
Christopher Almeida	South Pasadena	CA	91031	United States	2026-03-02
Anne Rodman	Pasadena	CA	91103	United States	2026-03-02
Carl ebinger	Altadena	CA	91001	United States	2026-03-02
Alex Alleruzzo	Pasadena	CA	91101	United States	2026-03-02
Lesley Schott	Santa Ana	CA	92706	United States	2026-03-02
Anne McNeill	La Crescenta-Montrose	CA	91214	United States	2026-03-02
Janet Kubler	Valencia	CA	91355	United States	2026-03-02
ARMAGHAN RAEI	Glendale	CA	91208	United States	2026-03-02
Amanda Knight	Los Angeles	CA	90048	United States	2026-03-02
Jessica Menchaca	Pasadena	CA	91101	United States	2026-03-02
Valerie Okorochoa	Pasadena	CA	91101	United States	2026-03-02
E. Thomas Kotrla	Los Angeles	CA	90042	United States	2026-03-02

Nancy Fox				United States	2026-03-03
Buff Gontier	Pasadena	CA	91101	United States	2026-03-03
Vivian Woolfson	Pasadena	CA	91105	United States	2026-03-03
Andrea Leos	Arcadia	CA	91007	United States	2026-03-03
Colleen Hall-Johnson	Pasadena	CA	91104	United States	2026-03-03
Lance Armor		HI		United States	2026-03-03
Dylan Sherman	Whittier	CA	90602	United States	2026-03-03
Rodolpho Solorzano	Orange	CA	92868	United States	2026-03-03
Amy Barach	Pasadena	CA	91104	United States	2026-03-03
Jon Inwood	Brooklyn	NY	11226	United States	2026-03-03
Beatrix Zilinskas	Van Nuys	CA	91406	United States	2026-03-03
Rene Lopez	Van Nuys	CA	91405	United States	2026-03-03
Zaid Bari	Los Angeles	CA	90272	United States	2026-03-03
Kent Kunitsugu	Pasadena	CA	91101	United States	2026-03-03
Bellanira Tiguilá	Pasadena	CA	91104	United States	2026-03-03
Martha Mora	West Covina	CA	91790	United States	2026-03-03
Elizabeth LeVin	Tustin	CA	92780	United States	2026-03-03
Michael Prusek	Arcadia	CA	91006	United States	2026-03-03
Deborah Tannenbaum	Pasadena	CA	91101	United States	2026-03-03
Mari Noosh	Anaheim	CA	92807	United States	2026-03-03
Chanelle zinanzva	Edmonton		T6H 5W6	Canada	2026-03-03
Lilian De La Torre	Perris	CA	92571	United States	2026-03-03
behnaz Panah	Glendale	CA	91206	United States	2026-03-04
Navid Masoudinia		CA	92627	United States	2026-03-04
Daniel Quezada	Los Angeles	CA	90005	United States	2026-03-04
Ali Zand	Los Angeles	CA	91367	United States	2026-03-04
kat sal	laguna beach	CA	92651	United States	2026-03-04
Brittney Alvarez	Pasadena	CA	91104	United States	2026-03-04
سارا پاکدامن	Irvine	CA	92614	United States	2026-03-04
Nicholas Gorman	Pasadena	CA	91101	United States	2026-03-04
Ashley M	Newport Beach	CA	92658	United States	2026-03-04
Dan De Yo	Yorba Linda	CA	92886	United States	2026-03-04

Neda Moetamedi	Arcadia	CA	91007	United States	2026-03-04
reza nasr	Los Angeles	CA	90048	United States	2026-03-04
Manya Mohsenian	Ladera Ranch	CA	92694	United States	2026-03-04
Jennifer Bohnert	North Hills	CA	91343	United States	2026-03-04
Jesus Canales	San Francisco	CA	94116	United States	2026-03-04
Kimia bagheri	Van Nuys	CA	91406	United States	2026-03-04
Debra Roswell	San Bernardino	CA	92407	United States	2026-03-04
zara Hamidi	Santa Ana	CA	92706	United States	2026-03-04
Myra Arbabi	Sherman Oaks	CA	91403	United States	2026-03-04
Rosa mohammadi	Laguna Niguel	CA	92677	United States	2026-03-04
Eric Helge	Pasadena	CA	91105	United States	2026-03-04
Jaurdan Budgett	Belton	MO	64012	United States	2026-03-04
Patty Fan	Pasadena	CA	91101	United States	2026-03-04
James Hamilton	Northridge	CA	91343-1848	United States	2026-03-04
Benjamin Bock	Pasadena	CA	91101	United States	2026-03-05
Sahand Safaei	Van Nuys	CA	91401	United States	2026-03-05
Christopher Stephenson	Hacienda Heights	CA	91745	United States	2026-03-05
polin yadak	Anaheim	CA	92825	United States	2026-03-05
Vida Sina	Glendale	CA	91208	United States	2026-03-05
Sudie Laraen	Los Angeles	CA	90066	United States	2026-03-05
marjan asvadi	Los Angeles	CA	90017	United States	2026-03-05
Juan Castro	Victorville		92392	United States	2026-03-05
Heidi Kash	Agoura Hills	CA	91301	United States	2026-03-05
Mo Ely	Mission Viejo	CA	92692	United States	2026-03-05
Nazanin Kashani	Pico Rivera	CA	90660	United States	2026-03-05
Holly Flanagan	Los Angeles	CA	90045	United States	2026-03-05
Geoffrey Frank	Pasadena	CA	91107	United States	2026-03-05
Krystine Moreno	Los Angeles	CA	90011	United States	2026-03-05
stephanie lopez	Riverside	CA	92506	United States	2026-03-05
Miles White	Agoura Hills	CA	91301	United States	2026-03-05
Juli Ramos Gutierrez	Los Angeles	CA	90045	United States	2026-03-06
Telena Hill	Skokie	IL	60076	United States	2026-03-06

Caleb Martinez				United States	2026-03-06
Ariel Bermudez	Corona	CA	92982	United States	2026-03-06
Jorge Guzman	Moreno Valley	CA	92555	United States	2026-03-06
Claudia Beeman	Newport Beach	CA	92663	United States	2026-03-06
Jermain G	Woodland Hills	CA	91364	United States	2026-03-06
claudia gonzalez	Chino	CA	91710	United States	2026-03-06
Tyrie B	Moreno Valley	CA	92551	United States	2026-03-06
Jasmen Karami	Burbank	CA	91504	United States	2026-03-06
Milo Cuevas	Ontario	CA	91762	United States	2026-03-06
Leila Shabani	Van Nuys	CA	91406	United States	2026-03-06
Harvey Cordner	Pasadena	CA	91101	United States	2026-03-06
Reid schenck	Pasadena	CA	91105	United States	2026-03-07
Hem-young deFazio	Pasadena	CA	91101	United States	2026-03-09
Laura Hobart	Pasadena	CA	91101	United States	2026-03-10

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: karen
Sent: Friday, March 20, 2026 2:30 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: 511 S. Oak Knoll Appeal

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Dear City Council,

I am writing in regard to the 511 S. Oak Knoll Appeal. I live next door to the lot the building will be built on. I request that the council require improvements to the design to address concerns about the buildings' impact on neighborhood residents.

The building's current design will increase noise and light pollution for those living in adjacent buildings. The current building design extends very close to the property line. Four-stories of exterior hallways with an interior courtyard causes light pollution for neighbors and doesn't allow enough light to bottom floors for residents of 511. Gardens on the outside of the building would benefit the residents of 511 and the adjacent properties.

I am also very concerned about the building's impact on pedestrian safety on Oak Knoll between Del Mar and California. It is already a busy street. It can be dangerous for children who are walking and being dropped off at the McKinley school. It is also dangerous for other pedestrians. I walk on the block and throughout the neighborhood everyday to go to work and run errands. The traffic driving towards California can be especially bad. Drivers routinely ignore the right turn only sign on Oak Knoll and California. The increase in street parking and cars driving on the block, due to the new property, will decrease visibility, add to traffic, and make it even more dangerous for pedestrians.

I support building more housing in the neighborhood, but it should be done so that new and existing residents can live and move safely in the neighborhood.

Sincerely

Karen Beavers
91101

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Jomsky, Mark
Sent: Saturday, March 21, 2026 10:37 AM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: Fw: 511 South Oak Knoll

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From: Erika Foy
Sent: Saturday, March 21, 2026 8:17:23 AM
To: City_Council <ccouncil@cityofpasadena.net>; Márquez, Miguel <miguelmarquez@cityofpasadena.net>; Paige, Jennifer <jpaige@cityofpasadena.net>; Thyret, Pam <pthyret@cityofpasadena.net>; Jomsky, Mark <mjomsky@cityofpasadena.net>
Subject: 511 South Oak Knoll

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Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

With increasing state-driven development pressure, Pasadena cannot afford to get these decisions wrong.

I am writing regarding the proposed condominium development at 511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue and the upcoming appeal before you.

What is happening in this case reflects a much larger and deeply concerning pattern in Pasadena — one where neighborhood character, historic context, and environmental assets are treated as secondary considerations rather than foundational priorities.

The situation described by the adjacent homeowners is striking, particularly the risk posed to a mature canyon live oak that helps define the identity of the property and the surrounding neighborhood. As reported, this tree is not simply landscaping — it is a significant natural feature whose loss would be permanent and deeply felt.

Pasadena has long prided itself on being a “city of trees.” That identity is not symbolic — it is real, and it is fragile.

I say this not just as a resident, but as someone who has spent years actively working to protect Pasadena’s historic neighborhoods. I was directly involved in securing historic designation for Magnolia Avenue — a street defined not only by its architecture, but by its scale, canopy, and cohesive character.

Those protections were not created to be symbolic. They were intended to guide real decisions — especially when new development is introduced next to historic or character-defining resources.

That is why this moment matters.

The City’s determination that this project qualifies for a Class 32 CEQA exemption and presents “no unusual circumstances” is difficult to reconcile with the presence of a protected mature tree, adjacent historic resources, and unresolved environmental and design concerns.

When a mature, defining tree adjacent to a historic property is treated as something to be “managed” later, rather than protected from the outset, it signals a breakdown in how we are applying our own standards. The City’s own report acknowledges that this project will require measurable pruning and construction activity in close proximity to this tree — impacts that should not be minimized or deferred to later stages of review.

Equally concerning is the timing. The fact that these issues remain unresolved at the Concept Design stage suggests that critical environmental and design considerations were not fully addressed when they should have been.

As the City notes, this project is largely “by-right” and benefits from state-mandated density bonus concessions that limit local discretion. This makes it even more critical that the areas where the City *does* retain authority — including design review, environmental determination, and tree protection — are applied with rigor, not assumption.

This concern becomes even more urgent in light of recent and pending state legislation, including SB 79, which will continue to increase development pressure in established neighborhoods. As these laws expand development capacity, it becomes even more critical that cities like Pasadena get the fundamentals right — ensuring that environmental review, tree protection, and neighborhood compatibility are addressed early, clearly, and enforceably.

If we do not establish and uphold these standards now, we risk repeating the same conflicts across more neighborhoods, at greater scale, and with fewer opportunities to correct them.

This raises broader questions that extend beyond this single project:

- Are we fully evaluating environmental impacts — including mature tree loss — at the right stage of review?
- Are design decisions being locked in before key neighborhood concerns are resolved?
- Are we applying the same level of scrutiny to residential neighborhoods as we would to projects in Pasadena’s most visible corridors?

Residents are not opposing development outright. As reflected in this case, they are asking for something reasonable: thoughtful design, proper spacing, and meaningful protection of existing environmental features.

That is not obstruction — that is responsible planning.

Pasadena cannot claim to value its historic districts, tree canopy, and neighborhood character if those values are not meaningfully enforced when it matters most — at the point of project approval.

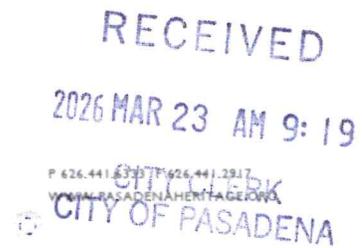
I respectfully urge you to carefully consider the concerns raised in this appeal and ensure that any project approved fully protects significant trees, respects historic context, and reflects the standards Pasadena residents have worked hard to establish.

The decisions made here will not only impact Oak Knoll — they will set a precedent for neighborhoods across the city, including those like Magnolia Avenue that residents have fought to preserve.

Sincerely,
Erika Foy



160 NORTH OAKLAND AVENUE
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA 91101-1714



March 21, 2026

Mayor Victor Gordo and Members of the City Council
City of Pasadena
100 N. Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91101

RE: Support for Appeal of Design Commission Concept Review of 511 S. Oak Knoll
Agenda Item 15

Dear Mayor Gordo and Council Members:

Pasadena Heritage supports the appeal that you will consider at your meeting of March 23 regarding the residential project at 511 S. Oak Knoll.

This project, at four stories, will be the tallest and largest development in this historic Pasadena neighborhood and will permanently change its streetscape and character. We understand the need for additional housing and support appropriate new housing initiatives throughout the city. We also recognize that this project is largely in conformance with zoning requirements and allowable density bonuses; however, the design of the project needs definite improvement. A more attractive, cohesive, and well-designed project will benefit the immediate neighbors, including important historic resources, the neighborhood as a whole, and the project itself.

We are particularly concerned because two historic properties are immediately adjacent to this project. To the south is a former fire station that was converted into a single-family home some years ago. This distinctive and charming residence has a long history of service to the community. To the west of the project is one of Pasadena's most gracious bungalow courts, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Cornish Court on 500 S. El Molino. To the north, the existing buildings are two stories, with the McKinley playing field directly beyond them.

We believe more can and should be done to improve the design of this project so that it becomes a more attractive and compatible neighbor to the adjacent properties and the surrounding neighborhood.

Our specific recommendations are as follows:

Design all four sides of the building. Given the height and location of the property, all four facades will be clearly visible and should be designed with equal care, comparable to the front

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Item 15

(east side) of the building. The current design of the south, west, and north facades is uninspired, and these elevations read as secondary and unimportant.

Move the project's circulation corridors to the interior and consider designing them as open, extended balconies around the courtyard. Private courtyard spaces can still be created at each unit entrance, separated from the corridor space. The exterior circulation corridors are a concern to adjacent property owners because they will be illuminated 24 hours a day, in close proximity to neighboring living spaces. Furthermore, the current exterior corridor design results in one side of each unit facing an enclosed corridor rather than benefiting from natural light, air, and views. On the north side of the project, the corridor blocks views of the mountains—an important amenity that is currently being lost.

Obtain a second opinion on the health and long-term viability of the protected oak tree, both during construction and afterward, to ensure it will survive, remain healthy, and continue to serve as an important amenity for the neighboring property, the project, and the street. Consider whether a larger setback is needed and whether the below-grade parking may impact the root system.

We hope that the City Council, acting in its capacity as the Design Commission, will reverse the concept approval for this project and instead continue the concept design process—or take the appropriate steps to send the project back for further refinement—until an improved proposal is brought forward.

Thank you for taking our comments into consideration.

Sincerely,

Bridget Lawlor

Bridget Lawlor, Ph.D.
Executive Director

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: p brown <>
Sent: Saturday, March 21, 2026 6:58 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: (3/23 Council mtg): SUPPORT STAFF RECOMMENDATION - 15. QUASI-JUDICIAL ACTION: 511 S. Oak Knoll Project

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Hello,

I am writing in SUPPORT of the planned multifamily unit at 511 S Oak Knoll.

I urge the Council to SUPPORT THE STAFF RECOMMENDATION to deny the appeal filed against the product.

Pasadena and Los Angeles County need as much new multifamily housing as can be developed, at all price levels. More supply of housing can stabilize housing prices. The 511 S Oak Knoll project will provide additional housing options, and offers a sensitive design.

Without more housing supply, Californians will continue to face rising housing costs, and many will depart. Loss of population will reduce California's weight in the electoral college and in Congress.

Thank you,

P.A. Brown
Pasadena,
District 6

RECEIVED

2026 MAR 23 AM 9:19

CITY CLERK
CITY OF PASADENA

March 22, 2026

Mayor Victor Gordo and City Council Members
City of Pasadena
100 N. Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91101

RE: 511 S. Oak Knoll

Dear Mayor Gordo and Council Members:

I am writing to express my personal support for the appeal of the Design Commission concept approval for the project at 511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue. The neighbors who filed the appeal have real and valid concerns that can be addressed by better design.

I also strongly support the recommendations submitted by Pasadena Heritage and hope that you will adopt them as part of your decision tonight.

I respectfully urge the Council to reverse the prior Design Commission approval, send this project back for continued Concept Review, and direct that a sub-committee of the Design Commission work with the architects to improve the project design, a process that has been successful with other projects.

As a resident who has lived nearby for fifty years, I am very familiar with this street, its scale and residential quality, and with the historic resources immediately adjacent to this project. This project will be significantly taller and larger than any other building along this block and will be a highly visible and dominant addition to the neighborhood. It should be a beautifully designed building that adds to the neighborhood and respects its historic neighbors. It is not!

The design needs further development and refinement. It has no character or identity. All four facades need to be intentionally and thoughtfully designed as they will be highly visible. As presented, the design does NOT reflect its context and is not the attractive, high-quality, well-thought-out building that Pasadena deserves. I am also concerned that not enough space has been allowed for the survival of the majestic oak tree, a protected tree that should be considered a major asset for the project.

Despite the need to build more housing, and the disruption of our local processes being caused by State legislation, Pasadena can and must expect and demand that new buildings be of real quality and add to our legacy of architectural excellence. Please send this project back to the drawing board until it meets our standards.

Respectfully yours,

Susan N. Mossman
50 year resident
Executive Director Emerita, Pasadena Heritage

3/23/2026
Item 15

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Christine Cooper
Sent: Sunday, March 22, 2026 4:17 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: Fw: 511 S. Oak Knoll Ave Appeal
Attachments: Home Addition.webp; How Neighborly Do Home Additions Have to Be.doc

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Dear members of the City Council,

I am writing to express my full support of the thorough, comprehensive appeal submitted by Brian Fulcher and Amanda Elioff. Their grievances and concerns are well-founded and reasonable, supported by many neighbors as witnessed by the signatures collected. In their appeal, they addressed many aspects of the proposed design that are flawed while offering viable, sound alternatives that would help mitigate the intrusiveness of this proposed project to the residents on the adjacent properties; those impacted the greatest and to the neighborhood at-large.

Focusing specifically on one thing, I would like to briefly touch upon the long-lasting negative impact the proposed design would have on the affected neighbors if not modified.

Attached is an article along with a photo from The New York Times which resonated with me because of the incongruity of this addition by its outlandish size, ugly design and lack of consideration for the neighbors. The next-door neighbor was interviewed. "It feels like we're literally living in the shadows," said Mr. Nguyen's neighbor Courtney Leonard."

The proposed project, if allowed, would definitely leave the neighbors in the shadows during the day as well as having to endure nighttime light pollution. (Please see Appendix H, page 25 of Appellant's letter.) This encroachment on their homes, their sanctuary, is heartbreaking.

In a recent newsletter from the Pasadena Heritage, it expressed concerns that the residents have not been given due consideration by the developer.

"Two landmark properties (the old fire station that is now a single-family home immediately to the south and one of Pasadena's finest bungalow courts to the west) will be directly affected, plus a majestic protected oak tree. The current design could be significantly improved and should be more compatible with the existing neighborhood. We hope the Council will agree."

I would also like to address the protected Oak Tree. I live directly across the street from the old fire station. There was a 250-year-old Oak Tree on our property when I moved here in 2001. A few years ago, it fell. It was in the middle of the night, fortunately causing no harm to anyone or structural damage to any nearby buildings. There should be great concern for the

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Canyon Live Oak tree that is currently being threatened. There could potentially be grave consequences if the tree were to fall if sufficient safeguards aren't put into place now. (Please reference pages 15-16 of Appellant's letter.) Plus, losing the tree would also be heartbreaking.

In the spirit of neighborliness, I hope you will consider the residents of S. Oak Knoll Avenue. Certain modifications can make this palatable. More studies are needed. It's worth taking that time to come up with a design that maintains the integrity of the neighborhood and is less intrusive to those who live on the bordering properties. Living through the construction for months, if not years, will be extremely stressful but if the current flawed design is the end product, there will be no satisfactory ending. The end result will forever have to be endured.

One entity's interest should not outweigh the importance of the emotional and mental well-being of those who call Pasadena their home.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your service to our community.

Christine Cooner

How Neighborly Do Home Additions Have to Be?

As municipalities encourage more housing density, neighbors debate what kind of construction should be allowed.

County officials originally approved Minh Nguyen's three-story addition to his house. His neighbors are not pleased. Credit...Jennifer Chase for The New York Times

By Alexander Nazaryan

March 12, 2026

It was the third floor that did it for Courtney Leonard. For months, she watched as builders erected a long, rectangular structure on the edge of her neighbor Minh Nguyen's property, forming a wall between their houses. Even at two floors, she thought, the boxy addition was out of place in Greenbriar, a suburban neighborhood in Fairfax County, Va.

Then she realized another floor was coming. Asked to recall her thoughts at that moment, Ms. Leonard responded with expletives, followed by a question: "How are we going to live with that?"

Fairfax County made it easier to build accessory dwelling units (A.D.U.s) in a 2021 zoning overhaul as a response to explosive growth — the area's population soared from 819,000 in 1990 to 1.15 million in 2020. As in many communities faced with a housing deficit, legislators hoped that streamlining a complex and arcane zoning code would encourage building.

So Mr. Nguyen, looking to find more room for his family, which includes his wife, two young children, and his Vietnamese immigrant parents, hired a surveyor to conduct a survey to build a new structure on his property. An engineer created detailed plans. He applied for a building permit last February for a three-story, 3,000-square-foot structure, 32 feet high, which was granted last August.

"It's weird — I know that," said Mr. Nguyen, of the bulky addition. "But it fits the needs of my family."

The addition was originally approved by the county. But inspectors later issued a stop-work order. Credit...Jennifer Chase for The New York Times

After Ms. Leonard grasped the scope of Mr. Nguyen's intentions that fall, she complained. "I have to express my deep frustration and disappointment with this situation," she wrote in an email to county officials, who initially responded that there was nothing to be done.

Around that time, Mr. Nguyen's addition began to gain broader attention, much of it unflattering. Drone footage posted to Facebook on Nov. 15 went viral. Of the 1,600 comments the 20-second clip attracted, many expressed sardonic bemusement: "So they added a small apartment complex." Others saw a budget hotel.

By then, Fairfax officials had taken notice. They asked for additional surveys, stemming from what the county called "staff concerns" about the side yard setback. Those surveys revealed that Mr. Nguyen's addition was too close to Ms. Leonard's property by 7.2 inches.

Inspectors also flagged Mr. Nguyen's walls, which they said were improperly prepared to withstand lateral shocks like earthquakes and wind. All work stopped on Nov. 24, 2025, and a hearing in April will decide the future of the project, which has cost Mr. Nguyen close to \$400,000.

"It feels like we're literally living in the shadows," said Mr. Nguyen's neighbor Courtney Leonard. Credit...Jennifer Chase for The New York Times

The neighbors' dispute is part of a national debate over housing density and affordability. As municipalities push for more housing, policymakers' ideas can clash with on-the-ground realities, with constituents grouching about blocked views or lost parking spots.

Internet commenters have argued that a homeowners' association, or HOA, could have stopped Mr. Nguyen. HOAs do dictate how yards and houses look, but they also add to the astronomic cost of home ownership. The average HOA fee is almost \$300 per month, according to the National Association of Realtors.

To some, all the rancor is misguided. "Objectively, a three-story building is not that big, even in a context where other buildings are one or two stories," said Tracy Hadden Loh, a fellow at The Brookings Institution. "A taller building being next to a shorter building isn't hurting anyone."

Today, the addition looks abandoned. Strips of Tyvek house wrap cling to the exterior frame. Inside, the stairs are finished. Beams indicate future rooms. But there aren't doors or windows. A new heating and air conditioning system was meant to service both the original house and the addition, but the stop-work order arrived before it was installed. It was a miserable space-heater winter. "My family just went through hell," Mr. Nguyen said.

Some drivers slow down on Mr. Nguyen's street, marveling at the addition. According to Mr. Nguyen, a few have hurled insults his way, including once when he was playing in the front yard with his son.

Ms. Leonard is also unhappy. The addition looms over her single-story midcentury house. "It feels like we're literally living in the shadows," she said. She worries her rooftop solar array is now useless. Same for the backyard pavilion. Parts of her house have become cold and damp, she says.

"I don't know that there's a good solution here," said Pat Herrity, a county supervisor. "A bad situation all around," as he called it, could have been avoided if Mr. Nguyen had stopped to consider the principles of neighborliness. "Common sense says you don't build a structure 30 feet tall and 60 feet long right on your neighbor's property line," Mr. Herrity said.

"It's weird — I know that. But it fits the needs of my family," said Mr. Nguyen. Credit...Jennifer Chase for The New York Times

Mr. Nguyen says he's trying to do right by his family by giving them more space. He also noted that nearby suburbs are full of gaudy mansions, including a White House replica in McLean.

"I feel, right now, everybody is against me," Mr. Nguyen said. Still, he and Ms. Leonard say they have no animosity toward each other. If never friends, they remain friendly.

Mr. Nguyen filed an appeal. The time to reject his plans, he argued, was when he submitted them in 2025. On that, at least, he and Ms. Leonard agree. "I certainly place some blame on the county for allowing it to get this far," she said.

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Ellen Yu
Sent: Monday, March 23, 2026 7:45 AM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Cc: 511.not.okay@gmail.com
Subject: 511 S. Oak Knoll Appeal

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [511 not okay](#) so you may not know why this is important

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Dear Members of the Pasadena City Council,

I am writing to share concerns regarding the proposed 511 development and its impact on the surrounding neighborhood. There are other designs that could address the city's housing needs and not bring negative effects as this one does.

As currently designed, the project does not appear to align with the City of Pasadena's design guidelines. The structure extends close to the property line, and risks undermining the historic character that defines this area. Neighbors to its north and south don't need to feel a large boxy mass towering over them. Additionally, this design causes harmful light pollution with its four stories of exterior hallways while also limiting natural light to lower-floor units within the building itself.

Furthermore the project's minimal five-foot setback further reduces available green space and may encroach upon a historic, protected oak tree.

There is a better way! Incorporating more generous setbacks and exterior garden spaces would not only help preserve neighborhood character but also enhance the quality of life for both residents of the development and adjacent properties.

There are also traffic and safety concerns. With Eliot Arts Magnet School now operating at McKinley School following the Eaton fire, traffic in the area has already increased. The addition of new residents and associated vehicle activity near California Boulevard could make South Oak Knoll Avenue a more dangerous corridor, particularly for students and families.

We support the addition of new housing in our neighborhood. However, we strongly encourage the City to ensure that new developments are thoughtfully designed to respect existing community character, protect environmental features, and promote safety and livability for both current and future residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ellen Yu

owner of a unit in 501 S. Oak Knoll Ave.

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2026 MAR 23 AM 9:37

CITY CLERK
CITY OF PASADENA



March 23, 2026

City Council

100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: 511 South Oak Knoll Avenue

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

Livable Pasadena submits the following comments regarding the proposed project at 511 South Oak Knoll Avenue and the appeal before you.

We support thoughtful growth and housing production in appropriate locations and recognize the constraints cities face under current state housing laws. These constraints, however, do not eliminate the City's responsibility to apply its own standards rigorously, to protect environmental resources, and to ensure that development decisions are supported by clear and supported findings. In this case, the project raises serious concerns about whether those responsibilities have been met, particularly with respect to tree protections and environmental review.

The City has determined that the project qualifies for an exemption under CEQA, concluding that no unusual circumstances are present. Given the project's immediate proximity to a mature protected tree and its adjacency to historic resources, that conclusion merits heightened scrutiny. These site-specific conditions are not typical of infill development and meaningfully distinguish this project from others that may appropriately qualify for an exception. Treating this site as routine risks overlooking impacts that are both foreseeable and significant.

Mature trees are a foundational element of Pasadena's environmental health and climate resilience. They provide irreplaceable benefits, including shade, urban heat reduction, air quality improvements, and neighborhood character. These benefits accrue over decades and cannot simply be replicated through replacement plantings or post-construction mitigation.

The Staff Report acknowledges that the construction will occur near a protected canyon live oak and will involve measurable pruning. While mitigation measures are proposed, it is well established that impacts to mature trees are not always temporary or reversible. Damage to root systems, long-term stress, and increased vulnerability to disease can persist well beyond the construction phase. Tree

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protection must be treated as a primary environmental consideration, not a deferred or secondary design issue. Clear and enforceable tree protection measures should be established before project approval, at a stage where meaningful adjustments to site planning remain possible. Prematurely approving the project here will undermine the City's stated commitment to environmental stewardship and limits the Council's ability to ensure that negative impacts are avoided.

Additionally, several fundamental elements of the project, including lighting impacts and aspects of design compatibility, are deferred to later phases of review. While phased design review can be appropriate, it should not be used to postpone the resolution of core environmental and site-dictated issues. These considerations are integral to determining whether the project, as proposed, should be approved.

The Staff Report further notes that the project is largely permitted by right and relies on state density bonus provisions that restrict local discretion. Precisely because of these limitations, the areas where the City does retain authority are critically important. Environmental review, design review, and tree protections take on even greater significance. These are not peripheral matters. They represent the primary tools available to the city to protect Pasadena's character, environmental resources, and our green spaces. More broadly, as state legislation has continued to expand development capacity, individual project approvals have increasingly defined Pasadena's future urban form. The cumulative loss of mature trees is in opposition to the City's climate goals and livability commitments. Although state housing laws require cities to plan for and permit additional housing, they do not require cities to abandon design standards, disregard neighborhood compatibility, or allow the unnecessary loss of mature trees. These outcomes are the result of local policy choices—not inevitabilities. Each decision matters, particularly when irreplaceable natural assets are at risk.

Livable Pasadena respectfully urges the City Council to affirm its commitment to high-quality design, meaningful tree protection, and context-sensitive planning. When projects are approved at their maximum allowable density without sufficient attention to design, scale, and environmental impacts, the result is development that feels out of place and erodes the character of surrounding neighborhoods. Pasadena has long been recognized for its tree-lined streets, historic neighborhoods, and thoughtful development. Pasadena should not be forced to choose between meeting housing goals and preserving its identity. Other cities have shown this balance is possible. We need to be stewards of our growth and to grow in a way that future generations will recognize as worthy of Pasadena.

In the matter before the Council this evening, we ask the City Council to ensure that the environmental findings here are fully supported by the record, that the tree protection measures are clearly defined and enforceable prior to approval, and that site-specific constraints are meaningfully reflected in the project's design. Doing so will help to set important precedent for responsible infill development citywide and will protect the historic home and the mature protected tree at issue here.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Foker and Erika Foy
Livable Pasadena

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Garofalo, Ronnie <
Sent: Monday, March 23, 2026 9:50 AM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Cc: S. Oak Knoll Neighbors
Subject: RE: 511 S Oak Knoll Appeal

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Dear Council members,

I am the owner of the Landmark Cornish Court on the west side of the 511 S Oak Knoll property. This building will tower over our charming units and block sun much of the day.

As designed, the 511 proposed development does not follow City of Pasadena Design Guidelines. It's boxy, extends nearly to the property line, and the design will destroy the historic character of the neighborhood.

Placing the Gardens on the outside of the building would benefit the residents of the new building and all of the adjacent properties. I support additional housing in our neighborhood, but want it to be thoughtfully designed for both new homeowners and for existing ones.

Thank you.

Ronnie Garofalo

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McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Akina Cox
Sent: Monday, March 23, 2026 10:46 AM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: 511 s oak knoll

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Dear Mayor Gordo and Councilmembers,
I'm a Pasadena resident and I'm writing to ask you to reject the appeal of 511 S Oak Knoll and allow the project to complete design review. The project passed Concept Review 4-2 and would have another hearing before the design is finalized. This appeal unnecessarily slows housing development, adding costs for builders that ultimately further raise rents in our already rent-burdened city.
This project would provide 6 affordable homes, with five reserved for very-low income individuals who face particular challenges finding housing in Pasadena. It's proposed for a vacant lot in a high-resource neighborhood close to major transit stops and a commercial corridor on Lake with many jobs and services. Additionally, the neighborhood is already zoned for multifamily buildings and contains multiple two- and three-story condo and rental buildings.
Granting the appeal would force a redesign that may make the project infeasible and violate state housing laws. Please follow the recommendations to reject the appeal. Infill housing in walkable, transit-rich areas is crucial to achieving our goals for a more affordable and sustainable city.
Sincerely,
Akina Cox
15 year resident of Pasadena

com

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Stepheny Perez
Sent: Monday, March 23, 2026 10:47 AM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: Support housing in Pasadena

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Sincerely,

Stepheny Perez

3/23/2026
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McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Robert Firstman
Sent: Monday, March 23, 2026 10:48 AM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: 511 S Oak Knoll

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Dear Mayor Gordo and Councilmembers,
I'm a Pasadena resident (zip code 91106) and I'm writing to ask you to reject the appeal of 511 S Oak Knoll and allow the project to complete design review. The project passed Concept Review 4-2 and would have another hearing before the design is finalized. This appeal unnecessarily slows housing development, adding costs for builders that ultimately further raise rents in our already rent-burdened city. This project would provide 6 affordable homes, with five reserved for very-low income individuals who face particular challenges finding housing in Pasadena. It's proposed for a vacant lot in a high-resource neighborhood close to major transit stops and a commercial corridor on Lake with many jobs and services. Additionally, the neighborhood is already zoned for multifamily buildings and contains multiple two- and three-story condo and rental buildings. Granting the appeal would force a redesign that may make the project infeasible and violate state housing laws. Please follow the recommendations to reject the appeal. Infill housing in walkable, transit-rich areas is crucial to achieving our goals for a more affordable and sustainable city.
Sincerely,
Robert Firstman

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Alex Dunn
Sent: Monday, March 23, 2026 10:48 AM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: Reject the appeal of 511 S Oak Knoll

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This project would provide 6 affordable homes, with five reserved for very-low income individuals who face particular challenges finding housing in Pasadena. It's proposed for a vacant lot in a high-resource neighborhood close to major transit stops and a commercial corridor on Lake with many jobs and services. Additionally, the neighborhood is already zoned for multifamily buildings and contains multiple two- and three-story condo and rental buildings.

Granting the appeal would force a redesign that may make the project infeasible and violate state housing laws. Please follow the recommendations to reject the appeal. Infill housing in walkable, transit-rich areas is crucial to achieving our goals for a more affordable and sustainable city.

Sincerely,
Alex Dunn

3/23/2026
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McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Kevin Lou
Sent: Monday, March 23, 2026 10:49 AM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: 511 S Oak Knoll Project

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Mayor Gordo and other wonderful Councilmembers,

I'm writing you to ask that you reject the appeal of 511 S Oak Knoll and **allow the project to complete design review**. I am a local resident that lives just a couple blocks away on Marengo that welcomes this improvement to our neighborhood. This vacant lot is an incredible opportunity to allow more folks to live in our city and drive more revenue to the businesses that call our city home.

There is zero displacement that occurs with this project - no one is getting pushed out. This is an easy win for Pasadena.

Thank you,
Kevin Lou

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McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Philip Taylor
Sent: Monday, March 23, 2026 11:03 AM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: Agenda item 15

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Dear Mayor Gordo and Council-members,
I am writing to ask you to reject the appeal of 511 S Oak Knoll. We are currently in a severe housing crisis, which will only be made worse by blocking or delaying housing. The project passed Concept Review 4-2 and would have another hearing before the design is finalized. This appeal unnecessarily slows housing development, adding costs for builders that ultimately further raise rents in our already rent-burdened city.

This project would provide 6 affordable homes, with five reserved for very-low income individuals who face particular challenges finding housing in Pasadena. It's proposed for a vacant lot in a high-resource neighborhood close to major transit stops and a commercial corridor on Lake with many jobs and services. Additionally, the neighborhood is already zoned for multifamily buildings and contains multiple two- and three-story condo and rental buildings.
Granting the appeal would force a redesign that may make the project infeasible and violate state housing laws. Please follow the recommendations to reject the appeal. Infill housing in walkable, transit-rich areas is crucial to achieving our goals for a more affordable and sustainable city.

The project is on a vacant lot and will lead to no demolition or displacement. The project is in a walkable area, with convenient access to public transportation - exactly where we all agree that housing should be constructed asap.

As an environmentalist, I must speak out, because dense housing near transit is the most important thing we can do to protect the environment and prevent climate change. As a physician and public health expert, I must speak out, because allowing people to live within car-lite neighborhoods will prevent countless injuries and deaths, improve physical fitness, and lessen pollution.

Sincerely,
Philip Taylor

[redacted]

•