Zoning Hearing Officer Addendum
Single Family Compatibility Permit No. 7377
3140 East California Blvd
July 13, 2026

It is my understanding that members of the public have filed appeals of my decision to approve Single-Family Compatibility Permit (SCP) No. 7377. This permit authorizes the demolition of an existing single-family residence and the construction of a new 4,955-square-foot, two-story single-family residence with a 467-square-foot attached two-car garage at 3140 East California Boulevard. The proposal exceeds the Neighborhood Compatibility floor area threshold established by the City's Zoning Code and therefore required approval of a Single-Family Compatibility Permit.

Prior to the public hearing held on June 3, 2026, I carefully reviewed the staff report and all supporting exhibits, conducted a site visit of the subject property and surrounding neighborhood, and considered all written correspondence submitted by members of the public. I also carefully considered the testimony presented during the public hearing by both the applicant and neighboring residents. The principal issues raised throughout the review process related to the project's massing and scale, potential privacy impacts to adjoining properties, the adequacy of landscaping, and whether the proposed residence would remain compatible with the established character of the neighborhood.

After thoroughly reviewing the administrative record, I concurred with staff's recommendation that the required findings for approval could be made. I found the staff analysis to be comprehensive, factually supported, and consistent with the requirements of the Zoning Code. I was also persuaded by the applicant's presentation demonstrating that the project had been thoughtfully designed to respond to the site's constraints and that the concerns expressed by neighboring property owners could be appropriately addressed through the project design and conditions of approval. The following considerations were particularly significant in reaching my decision.

Compliance with the Zoning Code

I agree with staff's determination that the proposed residence complies with all applicable development standards of the City's Zoning Code with the exception of the Neighborhood Compatibility floor area limitation, which is the specific purpose of the requested Single-Family Compatibility Permit. Although the proposed residence exceeds the Neighborhood Compatibility threshold by 1,325 square feet, the project remains well below the maximum gross floor area otherwise permitted on the property. The combined gross floor area of the proposed residence and attached garage totals 5,422 square feet, which complies with the maximum allowable gross floor area of 5,799 square feet for the site.

In addition, the project complies with all applicable standards governing building height, setbacks, encroachment plane, site coverage, parking, and other residential development requirements. I therefore concluded that the requested permit is limited to the Neighborhood Compatibility provision and does not require relief from any other zoning standard.

Compatibility, Massing, and Scale

A primary issue raised by neighboring residents involved the overall size and visual appearance of the proposed residence. After reviewing the plans and visiting the site, I concluded that the project has been designed in a manner that is compatible with both the existing and anticipated future development along the blockface.

While the proposed residence is larger than the Neighborhood Compatibility calculation, compatibility is determined by more than floor area alone. The proposed dwelling incorporates architectural elements that are characteristic of the surrounding neighborhood. These design elements are consistent with several residences within the immediate vicinity.

Equally important, the proposed residence maintains generous setbacks that are consistent with the established development pattern. The dwelling's proposed front setback will be matching the existing development pattern and maintaining a front setback comparable to neighboring homes. The majority of the new structure will occupy approximately the same footprint as the existing residence, with the building mass generally centered on the lot rather than pushed toward adjoining properties.

I also found that the building's architectural articulation, varying roof forms, recessed wall planes, balconies, and fenestration effectively reduce the perception of bulk and mass. These design features prevent the structure from appearing massive and help ensure that it remains visually compatible with surrounding residential development despite its larger floor area.

Privacy

Concerns were expressed regarding potential privacy impacts resulting from the proposed second-story balconies and windows overlooking adjacent residential properties. While these concerns are understandable, I did not find that the proposed project would result in privacy impacts beyond those typically associated with two-story residential development within established single-family neighborhoods.

The proposed residence complies with all applicable setback requirements, and the separation between the proposed dwelling and surrounding residences is consistent with the existing development pattern in the neighborhood. Additionally, the proposed balconies are incorporated as architectural features of the residence and are not an unusual or incompatible element within the context of the surrounding residential area. The City's Zoning Code recognizes that two-story residences may include elevated windows, balconies, and outdoor living areas, and I found no substantial evidence demonstrating that the proposed design would create unreasonable privacy impacts that would warrant denial of the permit.

However, recognizing the concerns raised by neighboring residents and to further enhance compatibility between the proposed residence and adjacent properties, I determined that additional measures would be appropriate. Accordingly, I imposed conditions requiring additional tree plantings along the side property lines and the use of tempered windows on side elevations to provide additional screening and minimize potential privacy concerns. These conditions provide an

additional level of protection for neighboring properties while allowing the project to proceed consistent with the City's zoning regulations and neighborhood compatibility objectives.

Landscaping

Several comments were received expressing concerns that additional landscaping should be required to soften the appearance of the proposed residence and provide additional screening between neighboring properties.

While landscaping can contribute positively to residential design and neighborhood compatibility, I determined that the absence of additional landscaping beyond the requirements of the Zoning Code does not constitute a basis for denial of the requested entitlement. The proposed project complies with all applicable landscaping requirements, and no protected trees are proposed for removal as part of the project. Furthermore, landscaping is an element that can mature and evolve over time and, while it may enhance the visual relationship between properties, it is not the sole determining factor in evaluating compatibility under the City's Single-Family Compatibility Permit findings.

Nevertheless, in recognition of the concerns raised by neighboring residents regarding privacy and to further enhance compatibility with adjacent properties, I imposed a condition requiring additional tree plantings in locations where they would provide meaningful screening and privacy benefits. This condition provides additional buffering between properties while maintaining consistency with the City's development standards and the overall intent of the Single-Family Compatibility Permit process.

General Plan Consistency

I also agree with staff's conclusion that the project is consistent with the City's General Plan. The property will continue to be developed with a single-family residence consistent with its Low Density Residential land use designation. The replacement dwelling maintains the residential use of the property while incorporating architectural features, setbacks, and building placement that reinforce the existing neighborhood character.

The project is also consistent with General Plan policies encouraging replacement housing that reflects neighborhood character through compatible building form, architectural design, and relationship to the street. Likewise, the project satisfies the General Plan's objective of achieving appropriate building scale and massing by complying with all applicable dimensional standards and locating the principal building mass toward the center of the site.

Conclusion

Based upon my independent review of the entire administrative record, the evidence presented during the public hearing, my site visit, and the staff analysis, I determined that the required findings for approval of Single-Family Compatibility Permit No. 7377 can be made.

Although the proposed residence exceeds the Neighborhood Compatibility floor area threshold, the project complies with all other applicable development standards and has been designed in a manner that is compatible with the existing and anticipated character of the surrounding

neighborhood. The architectural design, contextual setbacks, articulated massing, and continued single-family residential use collectively support the conclusion that the project will not be detrimental to adjacent properties or to the public welfare.

For these reasons, I reaffirm my decision to approve Single-Family Compatibility Permit No. 7377.

Respectfully,

Alex Garcia

Alex Garcia
Zoning Hearing Officer