



December 7, 2020

City of Pasadena Design Commission
Attn: Michi Takeda
Hale Building
175 N. Garfield Ave., 2nd Floor
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: 740-790 E. Green St.

Dear Members of the Design Commission:

Pasadena Heritage acknowledges this project has improved in several key ways since it was last presented, and we appreciate the improvements. We were pleased to have the developers early on in the design process attend our Advocacy Committee meeting on May 2, 2019. We provided some feedback at the time and are glad to see that our comments have been taken to heart. Those suggestions from 2019 are attached to this letter for your reference.

The main change from the previous version that we are pleased to see is a reduction and reorientation of the height. Limiting the frontage along Green Street to three stories is appropriate, and the step-backs help protect both the ficus trees as well as the Lutheran church south of the property. We also ask that there be subterranean setbacks/stepbacks so that the underground parking structure does not undermine the critical root zones of the ficus trees. The Planning Department has been crafting these root protection setbacks as part of the Specific Plan updates, and their guidelines should be adopted now for this project.

We are interested in seeing what will be proposed for the pocket park and courtyard spaces, and hope that meaningful landscapes can be created. We believe that high-quality materials should be used on this building, and windows are recessed enough to create interesting relief. We look forward to see how this project is further refined as the design process continues.

Sincerely,

Susan N. Mossman
Executive Director

Andrew Salimian
Preservation Director

Attachment A: Advocacy Committee Meeting - Feedback to Development Proposal at
740-770 E. Green St.



Advocacy Committee Meeting
Feedback to Development Proposal at 740-770 E. Green St.
Thursday May 2nd, 2019

The project is BIG... especially compared to the adjacent context, which is very concerning. With a maximum height of 85' in the middle of the project, we find the project to be overscaled. We recommend trying to reduce the overall height, and making sure the highest points are set back enough so as to not impose on the surrounding neighborhood. Is the parking fully subterranean? Can it be pushed further down to lessen height?

Break up the massing. Much of Green Street in Pasadena is very walkable with a neighborhood feel. This effect is aided by the collection of small to mid-sized buildings along the street. Larger buildings, and especially those that take up a whole block, run the risk of becoming too monumental, and break up this pleasant "rhythm of the street" for pedestrians. More can be done to make sections of the building seem independent of each other along Green Street, so as to make the building seem less monolithic from the street level.

More sight line studies from the street. While two renderings from approximate street level were presented, a rendering from each corner at the pedestrian level is really needed to make sure the additional height of the building is adequately set back.

Protect existing trees... including the trees on Oak Knoll, and make sure the building envelope does not pose risks to the Ficus trees on Green Street. A 5' setback from the building line will not accommodate the root system nor canopies of these protected street trees, so pulling back around the trees is important.

Choose high quality materials. The exterior "wood-like material" and the boxy white façade finish on the commercial base were discussed. Faux wood is not recommended as an exterior finish. On the commercial base, we suggest exploring the use of stone or cast-stone, which are appropriate, durable materials and would further differentiate the commercial exterior from that of the residential.

Window depth creates more elegant shadow lines. We recommend a depth of at least 6".

Reorient the single loaded corridor on the upper floor. As it is currently planned, the open-air corridor faces northward, and the apartments have a southern exposure to the courtyard. This arrangement could be flipped, with the apartments getting northern views of the mountains and downtown Pasadena, while the corridor opens up to the interior courtyard. This has a positive benefit on energy efficiency and provides apartments with preferred north-facing natural light and mountain views.

Increase overhangs... in keeping with a Pasadenan tradition. Overhanging roofs are common on historic buildings in Pasadena. Overhangs can additionally be sized so that they provide shade in the summer while allowing sunlight in the winter, reducing energy costs. In conjunction with this, further lighten the top floor apartment units, providing larger windows to differentiate the top of the building.