



**PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT**

DATE: DECEMBER 8, 2020
TO: DESIGN COMMISSION
FROM: DAVID M. REYES, DIRECTOR, PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: ADVISORY REVIEW – PROPOSED PLANNED DEVELOPMENT MIXED-USE PROJECT WITH 263 RESIDENTIAL UNITS AND 16,234 SQUARE FEET OF COMMERCIAL USE
740-790 E. GREEN STREET, 118 S. OAK KNOLL AVENUE AND 111 S. HUDSON AVENUE

Background:

The purpose of this review, pursuant to Zoning Code Section 17.61.030.I.5.b, is to provide “recommendations to the Commission and Council on aesthetic and urban design issues related to architecture, landscaping, site plan, and related aesthetic issues, as well as historic preservation” related to a proposed Planned Development. The proposal is for the construction of a new three-to-five-story, approximately 253,917-square-foot mixed-use project with 16,234 square feet of ground-floor commercial space and 263 residential units at 740-790 E. Green Street, 118 S. Oak Knoll Ave. & 111 S. Hudson Ave. The site is on the south side of Green Street between Oak Knoll Avenue and Hudson Avenue and extending south to approximately Mira Monte Pl. (lot area approximately 2.33 acres).

Surrounding properties include several multi-story office and mixed-use buildings ranging between 4 and 9 stories in height as well as lower-scaled commercial, office and institutional buildings and surface parking lots. Nearby designated historic resources include the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District one block to the west of the site, as well as the Green Street Village Landmark District and Constance Hotel (1926, McNeal Sawasy) three blocks to the east. Nearby eligible but undesignated historic resources include J.W. Robinson Pasadena (now Target) at 777 E. Colorado Boulevard (1957, Pereira & Luckman); the Arcade Building at 690 E. Colorado Boulevard (1927, Marston & Maybury), the Florence Theater Building at 766 E. Colorado Boulevard (1917, Oliver Perry Dennis) and the OK Earl Corporation building at 199 S. Hudson Avenue (1967). The site is within the CD-4 Zoning District (Central District Specific Plan, Pasadena Playhouse Subdistrict).

A Preliminary Consultation was conducted for the project on January 9, 2018 and the comments that the Commission provided at that time are in Attachment B. Since that time, the project has been substantially redesigned, including reductions in the project scope and reduction in size and relocation of a proposed public park on the project site. In particular, the building heights have been revised to be more consistent with Zoning Code requirements and the northerly building has been repositioned to engage with Green Street along its entire frontage. The

central courtyard now runs east-to-west with a pool area extending to the south at its eastern end. The proposed public pocket park is now proposed at the southwest corner of the site, as recommended by the Commission, and a small additional residential courtyard extends northward from its eastern end. The building has also been reduced from a maximum of six stories to a maximum of five, with the fifth floor portion area within the northerly portion of the southerly building.

The building is designed in a restrained contemporary style with flat roofs, projecting sunshades at the ground and roof levels, recessed and projecting balconies with glass railings, expressed vertical circulation cores, a repeating pattern of punched windows, and plaster exterior walls with metal grillework and projecting fins.

Applicable Design Guidelines:

- Design-Related Goals and Policies in the Land Use Element of the General Plan
- Design Guidelines in the Central District Specific Plan

Staff Observations:

Applicable Design Guidelines:

The following design guidelines are applicable to the project and should guide further development and study of the project as it moves forward in the design review process:

Design-Related Policies in the Land Use Element of the General Plan:

- 4.11: Require that development demonstrates a contextual relationship with neighboring structures and sites addressing such elements as building scale, massing, orientation, setbacks, buffering, the arrangement of shared and private open spaces, visibility, privacy, automobile and truck access, impacts of noise and lighting, landscape quality, infrastructure, and aesthetics.
- 7.1: Design each building as a high-quality, long term addition to the City's urban fabric; exterior design and buildings material shall exhibit permanence and quality, minimize maintenance concerns, and extend the life of the building.
- 7.2: Allow for the development of a diversity of buildings styles. Support innovative and creative design solutions to issues related to context and environmental sustainability.
- 7.3: Require that new and adaptively re-used buildings are designed to respect and complement the defining built form, massing, scale, modulation, and architectural detailing of their contextual setting.
- 25.4: Require that new development protect community character by providing architecture, landscaping, and urban design of equal or greater quality than existing and by respecting the architectural character and scale of adjacent buildings.

Central District Specific Plan:

- BD 1.2: Integrate new development with its surroundings, emphasizing functional and visual continuity while admitting individual expression.
- BD 1.3: Establish a harmonious transition between newer and older buildings; compatible design should respect the scale, massing and materials of adjacent buildings and landscape.
- BD 2.1 Design building volumes to maintain a compatible scale with their surroundings; in general, break down the scale and massing of larger buildings.
- BD 2.3 Employ strong building forms such as towers to demarcate important gateways, intersections, and street corners; strong corner massing can function as the visual anchor for a block.
- BD 2.4 Employ simple, yet varied masses, and emphasize deep openings that create shadow lines and provide visual relief; discourage monolithic vertical extrusions of a maximum building footprint.
- BD 3.1: Establish a building's overall appearance on a clear and pleasing set of proportions; a building should exhibit a sense of order.
- BD 3.2 Utilize a hierarchy of vertical and horizontal expression; facade articulation should reflect changes in building form.
- BD 7.3 Use design elements such as separate storefronts, display windows, shop entrances, exterior light fixtures, awnings and overhangs to add interest and give a human dimension to street-level building facades.
- BD 7.4 Give greater attention to detail at the street level of a building to satisfy the pedestrian; emphasize details that modulate the light and provide evidence of artistry and craft.
- UR 2.1 Vary residential building plans and facades to avoid monotony and create identity from building to building, as well as add interest to the street.
- UR 3.3 Design communal open space areas so as to lend them the character of outdoor rooms; building walls, plants and other landscape features should contribute to the containment of outdoor space.
- UR 3.4 Incorporate outdoor furnishings, recreational facilities and other community amenities; distinguish the design of communal spaces from private outdoor spaces.
- UR 3.6 Provide a convenient system of outdoor passages that connect residential outdoor spaces and ties these spaces to the network of public sidewalks.
- UR 5.1 Articulate residential building facades to unify a building's appearance, and add interest, scale, and three-dimensional quality; articulation may be provided through periodic changes in wall plane, building material and/or color, the introduction of building fenestration, or other approaches that create visual interest and/or shadow lines.

Pasadena Playhouse Subdistrict Design Guidelines:

Building Design Recommendation #1: Demand a high level of design excellence that is appropriate to an arts-oriented district; variety within the context of a street-oriented development pattern is encouraged.

Building Design Recommendation #2: Provide for contemporary, progressive and innovative design throughout the area; designs should respect their context, but not mimic historic styles.

Recommended Advisory Comments on Proposed PD:

- The current site design is responsive to the Commission's Preliminary Consultation comments and appropriately addresses the adjoining streets. In addition, the revised building massing addresses the Commission's previous concerns about the relationship of the building to Green Street and to adjacent lower-scaled existing buildings within the surrounding context.
- The current design is also responsive to previous comments from the Commission that recommended a more expressive roof design, relief of blank wall conditions, ensuring consistency of materials application, and implementation of an east-west orientation to the buildings.
- The architectural design has been simplified and incorporates a pattern of openings that responds to the City's architectural legacy, as recommended in the Commission's Preliminary Consultation comments; however, the long frontages are somewhat unbroken and monotonous and should be further studied to create a more diverse and interesting streetscape that responds to the rhythm of buildings within the surrounding context.
- Continue to work to ensure adequate protection of existing street trees at both the root and canopy levels.
- High-quality materials should be utilized in the design, including a high-quality and durable base material that creates texture at the pedestrian level.
- Study ways to ensure that the circulation pattern from the parking structure to the buildings incorporates passage through common open space areas of the project.
- Ensure that the courtyard spaces are designed to be usable outdoor rooms that incorporate amenities such as shade structures, canopy trees, water or fire features, outdoor cooking and eating facilities, seating, etc.

Design Commission

Advisory Review – 740-790 E. Green St., 118 S. Oak Knoll Ave. & 111 S. Hudson Ave. Planned Development

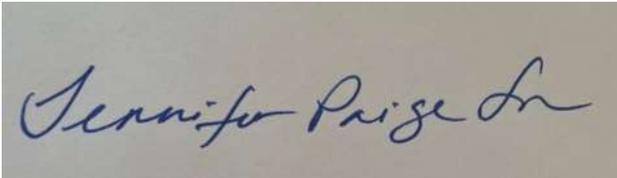
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Project Scheduling/Sequencing:

- Zoning Entitlements (Planned Development)
- Concept and Final Design Review by the Design Commission
- Building Permits

Respectfully Submitted,



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Attachments:

- A. Applicant submittal package
- B. Preliminary Consultation comments, January 11, 2018