



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: JULY 28, 2020

TO: DESIGN COMMISSION

FROM: DAVID M. REYES, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR CONCEPT DESIGN REVIEW
NEW CONSTRUCTION OF FOUR-STORY PROJECT WITH GROUND FLOOR AREA DEDICATED TO A "CHARITABLE INSTITUTION" USE AND 68 RESIDENTIAL UNITS INTENDED FOR PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING WITHIN A SINGLE-ROOM OCCUPANCY FACILITY
1000 EAST WALNUT STREET

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Design Commission:

Environmental Determination

1. Affirm that the application for Concept Design Review was subject to Environmental Review in the Statutory Exemption adopted by the Hearing Officer on July 15, 2020 for Conditional Use Permit (CUP) #6815 and that there are no changed circumstances or new information that would require further environmental review.

Findings for Compliance with the Tree Protection Ordinance

1. Acknowledge that no protected trees are proposed to be removed from the site as part of the proposed project.

Findings for Concept Design Approval

1. Find that the project, upon implementation of the conditions of approval, will comply with the purposes of design review, the design-related goals and policies of the Land Use Element of the General Plan, and the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-Family Residential Districts; and
2. Based on these findings, approve the application for Concept Design Review subject to the following conditions to be further reviewed during Final Design Review:

Conditions

1. Provide consistent architectural treatments on all elevations, including the west and south elevations, to maintain design consistency.
2. The design of the shade devices shall be further studied and revised to ensure they are more consistent with the design of the building.
3. The ground floor and storefront details of the north and east elevations, and to a lesser extent the south elevation, shall continue to be refined to be consistent with and reflect the same level of detail and attention as the upper floors.
4. The west entryway detailing shall continue to be refined to better reflect its purpose as a residential entryway, and the landscaping to the south of the entryway shall be further enhanced to appropriately buffer the residential units within from the public realm.
5. The column/pilaster detailing, cornice, belt course application, exterior stair details, solar shades, and landscaping shall further refined and the plans submitted for Final Design Review shall clearly depict these features as fully-integrated design details on the elevations. Separate enlarged details for all exterior architectural features shall also be included in the Final Design Review submittal.
6. The use of slightly darker shades of the primary building color shall be studied for use on the accent details, such as the column capitals, belt course, cornice and window trim.
7. Appropriate landscaping that is consistent with the overall landscape plan shall be provided along the southern and eastern property line to adequately screen and shade the surface parking lot.
8. The project shall comply with the conditions of approval of CUP #6815, to the satisfaction of said departments.

BACKGROUND:

Project Overview

- General Plan Designation: Low Commercial (0 – 1.00 FAR)
- Zoning: CG (Commercial General)
- Design Guidelines: The applicable design guidelines are the design-related goals and policies in the Land Use Element of the General Plan, the Design Guidelines and the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-Family Residential Districts.
- Site: The 27,095 square-foot site is located at the southwest corner of East Walnut Street and North Catalina Avenue. The site is currently improved with an existing two-story, 20,295 square-foot, commercial building that is currently utilized by a Charitable Institution

(The Salvation Army) use and offices. The site has surface parking. All existing improvements would be demolished with the proposed project.

- **Surroundings:** Surrounding properties include religious facilities and office uses to the north, two-to-three story multi-family residential developments to the south, commercial and multi-family residential to the east and religious facilities and multi-family developments owned by the Salvation Army to the west.
- **Project Description:** The project involves construction of a new 55-foot tall, four-story 51,694 square-foot building with ground floor Charitable Institution use and 68 dwelling units above, with 15 surface parking spaces.
- **Site Design:** The proposed rectangular building footprint occupies the northern half of the site, with the southern half utilized for surface parking and loading. The building is constructed with a zero setback from the northern property line, and an eight-foot setback from the eastern property line. The two-way vehicular access is located at the southeast corner of the site, from Catalina Avenue. The primary pedestrian entrance to the site is at the north elevation, from Walnut Street. A secondary pedestrian entrance dedicated to residential access only is located on the east elevation, facing Catalina Avenue.
- **Architectural Style:** Contemporary
- **Developer:** The Salvation Army
- **Architects:** Scott Carde (CARDE-TEN Architects)
- **Landscape Architect:** LRM Associates

ANALYSIS:

Design Commission Comments from Preliminary Consultation

On March 10, 2020, the Design Commission reviewed an application for Preliminary Consultation for this project. The Commission’s comments from that meeting, with excerpts from the design team’s responses, and staff’s comments, are detailed in the chart below. The design team’s full response are incorporated into the set of plans in Attachment A.

Commissioner Comments, March 10, 2020	Excerpt from Design Team Response	Staff Comments
1. The revised imagery presented at the meeting is moving in the right direction and is preferable to the design provided in the submittal packet. The design details should be incorporated into all	A. Details should be responsive to sun exposure North: Walnut Here the glazing is less about sun control than offering the public a glimpse of the building’s interior activities. Ground level recessed 6’ to 13’ Upper Levels: Units 18” (Typical all elevations)	The basic footprint and massing of the building has remained constant, however design of the building has significantly evolved to reflect a Contemporary architectural style with Art Deco and classical design influence on all elevations. The larger, more prominent windows that were

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<p>elevations, including the rear elevation, with execution of details for architectural features such as the punched window openings, window sizes and recess depths to be more contextual based on sun exposure and view potential.</p>	<p>Decks: Open air</p> <p>East: Catalina The same glazing details wrap around the corner onto Catalina except we add small exterior shades to block the eastern rising sun. We have the opportunity to provide small windows on the end units in the restrooms or living areas for additional light. For these, we have relaxed the deep inset pattern.</p> <p>South: Parking Lot First floor windows are overhung 2' by upper floors. Upper windows have shades placed asymmetrically over the windows. These devices also animate the elevation and protrude beyond the stucco plane.</p> <p>West: Tabernacle The stair tower and trash chute serve to partially block the harsh rays of the afternoon sun. Shade devices finish the job.</p> <p>The white stucco will reflect much of the sun's rays and not absorb as much heat as darker colors. The roof will be a bright white to do the same. The ground level is deeply recessed by the arcade and the building overhangs.</p> <p>B. Open up the unit window for better views.</p> <p>We have widened the unit window by a whole foot. The primary closet moved to a sidewall.</p>	<p>widened are recessed by 18" with the smaller windows to a lesser extent.</p> <p>However, the west elevation needs further resolution and additional architectural treatments to be consistent with the level of detail found on the other elevations, and staff recommends a condition of approval that consistent architectural treatments be provided on all elevations.</p> <p>The design of the building integrates a thoughtful approach to providing shade, however the design of the exterior shade devices appears significantly more Contemporary than the rest of the building and staff recommends a condition of approval that the design of the shade devices be further studied and revised to ensure they are more consistent with the design of the building.</p> <p>Upon implementation of the proposed conditions of approval, the comment from Preliminary Consultation will be satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>2. Further study the base condition and arches, taking into consideration the</p>	<p>A. Eliminate the solid spaces between the arches: i. We do not have 'solid spaces'.</p>	<p>The arcade has been re-configured so that the columns align in a more meaningful way with the upper floors. In</p>

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<p>possibility of eliminating the solid spaces between the arches, ensuring and appropriate scale of the base and arch conditions and the alignment of the arches and pilasters with the upper floors to ensure they appear structural. Study the Plaza las Fuentes development for additional visual cues on how to execute the arch details. However, the design should be more human scaled to balance the residential and charitable institutional use with the surrounding commercial and residential context and create a more pedestrian-oriented environment.</p>	<p>B. Align the columns with the upper floor solid panels i. They align.</p> <p>C. Desire for More Human Scale on Both Commercial and Residential Uses</p> <p>a. Commercial i. Recessed ground floor walls (6' and 13") expand the graciousness of the pedestrian experience. There is a direct entry from Walnut. ii. Larger storefront glazing opens up the ground floor activities to the passer-by. iii. The Walnut design theme wraps around the corner onto Catalina and, appropriately, reinforces the commercial corner.</p> <p>b. Residential i. Transition: The Catalina elevation addresses the transition from a commercial street to a residential street. The Walnut (north) elevation wraps around the corner onto Catalina to maintain a consistent corner condition. ii. The elevated patio initiates the transition from the public way to the privacy and security of the units. The raised residential entry is only 3-1/2' above the adjacent sidewalk and is accessible to pedestrians with both steps and a ramp. The entry stairs are generous, with risers no more than 7" high. The accessible ramp is a single slope to the patio. iii. While the Walnut elevation is designed to allow visual a connection between the</p>	<p>addition, the arcade has also been deepened facing Walnut Avenue.</p> <p>However, the storefront details facing Catalina avenue and Walnut Street do not appear to be treated with the same level of thought as the upper floor windows, and staff recommends a condition of approval that the ground floor and storefront details of the north and east elevations, and to a lesser extent the south elevation, continue to be refined to reflect the same level of detail and attention provided to the upper floors.</p> <p>Future refinements may include, but are not limited to, more deeply recessed windows, enlarged windows, exterior cladding treatments, traditional mullion configurations, and architecturally compatible trim detailing around the storefronts.</p> <p>Upon implementation of the proposed conditions of approval, the comment from Preliminary Consultation will be satisfactorily addressed</p>

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	<p>pedestrian and the activities inside, on Catalina, the relationship between the pedestrians and the sidewalk is different. We have two units facing Catalina so the raised grade provides those tenants some privacy from the street traffic. Residents can enjoy light, air and view without the intrusive eyes of pedestrians and without having to keep their window shades always drawn down.</p> <p>iv. The stairs actually serve another pedestrian purpose. There is a strong movement in architectural design that encourages the use of stairs as a health and well-being opportunity.</p> <p>v. There is more landscaping along Catalina with the 8' setback.</p>	
<p>3. The transition in design from the north elevation to the east elevation should be more closely studied, and the east elevation should be revised to reflect the design of the north elevation. The design of ground floor and lobby entrance detailing and the landscaping on the west elevation should be refined to more clearly signify the transition from non-residential to residential use, rather than the more complex volumetric composition of the second through fourth floor west elevation.</p>	<p>A. Should be designed to reflect the north elevation</p> <p>i. We agree. The Walnut (north) elevation wraps around the east elevation with the same recessed ground floor, free standing columns and upper floor recesses. As the eastern elevation moves south, there is a transition to reflect the interior activities: residential units. But the upper floors continue the same pattern of recesses and voids.</p> <p>B. Ground Floor / Lobby Entrance: The ground floor entry lobby will have a patterned concrete pavement. The Lobby floor pattern, while not concrete, will mimic that pattern.</p>	<p>The revised project depicts a more cohesive design that consistently and thoughtfully applies similar architectural features and detailing on both street facing elevations, giving the development a more unified appearance.</p> <p>However, the residential entrance on the west elevation still appears somewhat sterile and institutional, and additional refinement is needed to continue to soften this entryway. Staff recommends a condition of approval that the west entryway continue to be refined to better reflect its purpose as a residential entryway, and that the landscaping to the south of the entryway be enhanced to appropriately buffer the residential units from the public realm.</p>

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		Upon implementation of the proposed conditions of approval, the comment from Preliminary Consultation will be satisfactorily addressed.
<p>4. The east/Catalina Avenue facing elevation needs significant refinement, as it appears too symmetrical. The entry should be closer to the street level, and the composition of architectural features should be off-center, similar to the north/Walnut Street elevation. Consider pushing and pulling the northern and southern masses so that they are offset.</p>	<p>i. Symmetry Along Catalina: The elevation is a natural reflection of the indoor activities / uses. For efficiency and to provide all upper level units with direct natural light and air, the units are deployed all around the exterior of floors. This puts the vertical circulation precisely in the middle of the Catalina elevation. So this is not forced symmetry, but rather the natural expression of the building's uses.</p> <p>ii. That said, there are elements, mostly on the ground level, that modulate the symmetry:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The southern portion of the elevations is not aligned with the northern portion. It protrudes a few feet forward; 2. The exterior columns transition from free-standing along Walnut to pilasters on this elevation; 3. There are two residential units facing Catalina so the glazing pattern is different; 4. There is more softscape along Catalina than Walnut, acknowledging the transition from commercial to residential. 5. The upper floor recesses change according to the unit interior activity. For example, bathroom windows, where they occur, would be smaller; 6. The principal property manager's unit is on the upper 	<p>The east elevation has been significantly revised and the applicant has satisfactorily explained the functional purpose behind the symmetry of the upper floors facing Catalina Avenue and how the more asymmetrical ground floor details integrate with the interior programming.</p> <p>The comment from Preliminary Consultation has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>

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	<p>floor so the window pattern changes there as well.</p> <p>We think of Symmetry and Asymmetry in their abstract form as agnostic. It is only when either one is 'forced' that they feel out of place.</p>	
<p>5. A simple architectural style with simple massing and well executed details is appropriate. As the design evolves, it may also be appropriate to consider incorporating elements of the post-Depression era Art Deco style, which also features simple detailing. The color and materials palette should be revised in future submittals to reflect warmer tones and colors to better relate to the residential character of the building. However, the use of color should be restrained.</p>	<p>a. We've looked at some examples but have not yet found ones that work for this building. However, in the spirit of the Commissioner's suggestion (simple detailing) we are looking to better articulate certain features.</p> <p>For example:</p> <p>i. The ground floor columns will have an abstracted reference to more traditional load bearing columns: e.g. flutes, capitals. Since the capitals are not exclusively load bearing, we do not depict them literally.</p> <p>ii. Note also that the columns along Walnut are free standing but as they wrap around the building, they become pilasters.</p> <p>iii. We will need expansion joints (and perhaps reveals) in the stucco for pragmatic purposes: e.g. crack prevention. Those same utilitarian devices can also serve to detail the columns, recesses, and cornice.</p> <p>iv. Exterior solar shades also serve two functions; protection from heat gain and articulated devices that animate the flat elevation.</p> <p>v. Landscaping: We are looking at ways to have landscape steps next to the Catalina entry that relate to a low garden wall on either side of the vehicular entry,</p>	<p>The revised design features a simple building that incorporates some architectural details that are influenced by the Art Deco era. The early depictions of this strategy appear to be successful, and this approach better relates to the context and the City of Pasadena's architectural legacy.</p> <p>However, the submitted plans lack meaningful detail for these features and it is unclear if the abstract expression of traditional design elements, such as column capitals, and the upper floor belt course will ultimately be successful, particularly where the details transition in function from north to east (column capitals).</p> <p>Although the applicant's response to the Preliminary Consultation comments indicates the intent to further explore the expression of these details in the final design, staff recommends a condition of approval requiring the column detailing, cornice, belt course application, exterior stair details, solar shades, and landscaping be further explored and that the plans submitted for Final Design Review clearly depict these features as fully integrated design details, as well as separately provide enlarged</p>

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	<p>thereby relating that wall to the building.</p> <p>b.Color: We agree with the Commission's comments that there should not be a riot of color. To create a logic, we suggest the exterior stucco skeleton should remain white as reminder of the original form, but where the exterior is carved out (windows, open-air decks, etc.), we are leaning toward inviting color(s) to suggest the more personal activities within. Currently, we are enamored with a green color, but we would consider a warmer color.</p>	<p>details for all exterior architectural features.</p> <p>Color is typically reviewed at Final Design Review; however, the simple color palette is an appropriate approach for this project. Staff recommends a condition of approval that the use of slightly darker shades of the primary building color be studied for use on the accent features, such as the column capitals, belt course, cornice and window trim.</p> <p>Upon implementation of the proposed conditions of approval, the comment from Preliminary Consultation will be satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>6. Further refine the base/middle/top detailing of the design so that the base of the building is more consistent with the more refined modern details of the top and middle portions of the building. Simplify the number of materials used for the base and middle.</p>	<p>a.We agree. We want to keep the skeletal white box white and only add color in carved out areas. This will maintain the discipline of the original form yet heighten the sense of warmth inside.</p> <p>b.The columns will have references to base and capitals, albeit stripped to the minimum.</p>	<p>The design has been revised to more clearly express the base/middle/top composition in a cohesive manner using a more limited color and materials palette. As noted above, staff has recommended a series of conditions of approval to further refine these details in the Final Design Review submittal.</p> <p>The comment from Preliminary Consultation has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>7. Revise the detailing of the vehicular egress portal facing Catalina Avenue so that it better relates to the building and the adjacent residential context to the south. Consider using a mix of low garden walls and taller landscape hedges, rather than</p>	<p>We believe this is a comment based on our old scheme that showed a tall portal wall to drive under. This was eliminated earlier.</p> <p>We like a low (30") garden wall along the property line, but tall hedges would interfere with vehicular sightlines.</p> <p>Note: The client is considering a 6' security gate in the parking lot. This would be a wrought iron</p>	<p>The vehicular egress portal was eliminated from the design and replaced with a combination of low garden walls and landscaping, which are compatible with the residential context along Catalina Avenue.</p> <p>A simple metal gate, recessed 20 feet from the eastern property line, would be light in appearance and also compatible with the context.</p>

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the proposed entry portal.	automatic rolling gate. It would be set back 20 from the sidewalk and painted a color to match the building. We show how it might look in the drawings in case the client chooses this option.	The comment from Preliminary Consultation has been satisfactorily addressed.

Programming and Circulation

The proposed development has a relatively simple programming and circulation scheme. The ground floor is occupied by the proposed charitable institution use and the residential lobby, and will be accessible from the north, east and south elevations. Vertical circulation to the upper floor residential units and common amenities is provided via a centrally located vertical circulation core that contains an elevator shaft and stairwell. This circulation core leads to double loaded corridors on the second through fourth levels. The corridors are open and exposed at the east and west elevations, with additional prominent open decks on the north elevation at the second through fourth levels. Overall, the programming of the building and site is consistent with the applicable design guidelines and are responsive to the Commission’s Preliminary Consultation comments while maintaining the internal programming necessary to serve the needs of the future tenants and customers.

Orientation

The design of the building is strongly oriented toward both Walnut Street and Catalina Avenue, as demonstrated by the presence of significant vertically arranged and deeply recessed windows as well as deeply recessed open circulation decks that are arranged in a clear pattern on the north, east and west elevations. The street-facing orientation of the proposed building is further emphasized by the deeply recessed ground floor non-residential pedestrian entry from Walnut Street and the elevated, recessed residential pedestrian entry from Catalina Avenue, both of which are tentatively indicated to be emphasized with ground floor signage. As noted above, staff has recommended a series of conditions of approval to ensure the detailing is further revised to produce an architecturally consistent project that appropriately relates to both its non-residential and residential uses.

Height, Massing and Modulation

The height limit at this location is 45 feet. However, pursuant to Section 17.43 of the Zoning Code pertaining to Density Bonus law, a height increase of up to three additional stories, or 33 feet is allowed by right. In this case, the proposed building height is 55 feet. The building consists of an extruded rectangular mass with a flat roof, with the primary facades punctuated by deeply recessed window openings and open recessed circulation decks. These recessed architectural elements help provide articulation to the otherwise flat facades. At the ground floor, the non-residential entry is incorporated into a deeply recessed forecourt that is open to the sky, and substantial columns connect the upper floors to the street level and create a squared arcade behind which the storefronts are recessed. On the east elevation, the residential entryway is elevated above the sidewalk and recessed into the façade.

Overall, the height, massing and modulation depicted in the elevation drawings is appropriate and responsive to the design guidelines and previous comments from the Commission. The setback from the adjacent southern property and location on a corner lot also provide ample physical separation from adjacent buildings, which combined, serves to soften the impact of the proposed buildings larger mass.

Architectural Style and Detailing

The design of the proposed building has been significantly revised in response to the comments from the Design Commission during Preliminary Consultation. The revised design is now a simplified Contemporary architectural style with references to the Art Deco era. The design incorporates classical design elements such a clearly defined base/middle/top composition with an arcade, deeply recessed windows and shade elements on the east, south and west elevations, a decorative cornice, a belt course, and column/pilaster columns. As noted above, staff recommends a series of conditions to further explore the architectural detailing in preparation for Final Design Review.

Staff finds that the simplified mass of the revised design and the concept of the proposed changes are consistent with the design guidelines. The applicant will continue to refine the specifications and details of the proposed new materials and this will be presented as part of Final Design Review.

Compatibility

The proposed new building is compatible in terms of height, massing, setbacks and architectural design with its immediate surroundings including the larger scale commercial and residential buildings in the nearby context. Although the building is taller than the two-to-three story multi-family residential developments to the south, the generous rear yard setback with surface parking at the south side of the property serves as an open space buffer between the building and its southern neighbors. The height of the structure facing Walnut Street is consistent with existing commercial and mixed use developments found elsewhere on Walnut Street and along the nearby Lake Avenue. In addition, the revised design submitted for this review also architecturally relates better to the commercial context of Walnut Avenue, the residential context of Catalina Avenue and the design traditions of the City of Pasadena.

Conceptual Landscape Design

The landscape plans provided conceptual details for premier landscaping that would soften the existing Catalina Avenue streetscape, buffer the surface parking from the adjacent property to the south, and enhance the recessed openings on the north elevation facing Walnut Street. As noted above, staff recommends a condition of approval to revise the landscaping on the east elevation to emphasize the residential entryway. Staff also recommends that appropriate landscaping be provided along the southern and eastern property line to adequately screen and shade the surface parking lot.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This project has been determined to be statutorily exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code Section 21080(b)(9); Administrative Code, Title 14, Chapter 3, Article 12.5, Section 15194 (Affordable Housing Exemption). Section 15194 specifically applies to residential housing projects consisting of 100 or fewer units that are affordable to low-income households. One hundred percent of the total units, exclusive of the managers' units, are for lower income households.

The building, and the Charitable Institution land use proposed on the ground floor, meets Article 12.5's definition of "Residential" (Section 15191(l) of the CEQA Guidelines), as it consists of residential units and primarily neighborhood-serving good, services, or retail uses that do not exceed 15 percent of the total floor area of the project. The 7,549-square-foot nonresidential component of the building would be used for a Charitable Institution use, a neighborhood-serving service use, and comprises 14.6 percent of the total Project floor area.

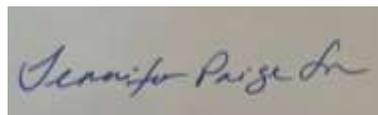
COMMENTS FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS:

As part of CUP #6815, the proposal was reviewed by the Police Department, the Fire Department, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Public Works, the Building and Safety Division, and the Planning Division. . Comments and conditions of approval from the Department of Transportation, the Department of Public Works, and the Building and Safety Division of the Planning and Community Development Department, are incorporated in Attachment B of this report.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed design of the project has satisfactorily addressed the comments provided during Preliminary Consultation and is consistent with the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial & Multi-Family Residential Districts.

Respectfully Submitted,



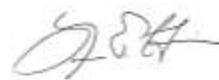
David M. Reyes
Director of Planning and
Community Development

Prepared by:



Amanda Landry, AICP
Senior Planner

Reviewed by:



Leon E. White
Principal Planner

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Attachments:

- A. Current plans & elevations
- B. Approval Letter and Conditions of Approval of CUP#6815