



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: MAY 25, 2021

TO: DESIGN COMMISSION

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

SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR FINAL DESIGN REVIEW
NEW CONSTRUCTION OF A 58-UNIT, FOUR-STORY, SINGLE ROOM OCCUPANCY (SRO) DEVELOPMENT WITH PARTIAL-SUBTERRANEAN PARKING
231 NORTH HILL AVENUE

RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends that the Commission:

Environmental Determination

Find that the application for Final Design Review was subject to environmental review in the Categorical Exemption adopted by the Design Commission for Concept Design Review of this Project on February 25, 2020, and that there are no changed circumstances or new information which would require further environmental review.

Findings for Compliance with the Tree Protection Ordinance

Acknowledge that there are no protected trees on the site.

Findings for Final Design Approval

1. Find that the project, upon implementation of the conditions of Final Design Review approval, will comply with the conditions of Concept Design Review;
2. Find that the project, upon implementation of the conditions of Final Design Review approval, will be consistent with the purposes of design review, the design-related goals and policies in the Land Use Element of the General Plan, and the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-Family Residential Districts; and,

3. Based on these findings, approve the application for Final Design Review subject to the following conditions, which shall be subject to staff review and approval prior to issuance of a building permit:

Conditions:

1. Large scale details and/or product specifications for all site amenities and landscape features shall be included in the plans submitted for Final Design Review.
2. The project shall comply with the conditions provided by the Departments of Housing, Public Works, and Transportation, included in this report as Attachment C, respectively, to the satisfaction of said departments.
3. The project features and actions indicated on the plans demonstrating consistency with the City of Pasadena Climate Action Plan shall be clearly incorporated into and shown on the plans submitted for Building Plan Check as a separate exhibit.
4. A more substantial decorative lintel detail shall be used, so that the proposed lintel stands proud from the adjacent wall surface.
5. An additional decorative detail, such as the curved stucco profile or the heavy timber pergola shall be incorporated at the open patio serving unit 401D of westerly end of the west building facing the street.
6. The architectural reveals/screeds shall clearly be depicted in the elevation drawings and details of the plans and provided to staff and for further review to ensure consistency with the overall design.
7. All metalwork, including perforated panels, light fixtures, flashing, etc. shall be a consistent color, independent of manufacturers' color names.
8. Provide a detail of the through the wall mechanical vent covers to ensure a high-quality, integrated installation (i.e., no exposed flashing).
9. Provide details of overflow drainage for the balconies to ensure that scuppers are either avoided (preferred) or, if required, carefully integrated into the design of the building and are high quality.
10. The project shall comply with the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance and any changes to the proposed landscape design that may be required shall be reviewed and approved by staff prior to issuance of a building permit.
11. A copy of this decision letter, including written responses to each condition indicating how and where they are addressed, shall be included in the plans submitted for building permit plan check.

12. The lighting temperature specified on the final plans shall not rise above 3,000 kelvin for all proposed exterior fixtures. Replacement lighting elements should be regulated by maintenance staff in the future.
13. An 8' x 8' minimum mock-up panel of the building finishes shall be provided and reviewed by staff prior to construction and installation.
14. Prior to issuance of a building permit, submit to staff written confirmation from utility providers (Pasadena Water & Power, Fire Department and The Gas Company) that the utility equipment shown on the plans are sufficient to meet the demands of the project and that the locations shown in the plans are approved.
15. This project will be subject to 50%, 75%, and 100% inspection points and sign-off by staff of the Design & Historic Preservation section to ensure that the project is constructed as indicated and specified in the decision letter and that all work is performed consistent with the approved plans.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The application presents design revisions in response to the conditions of approval from the previous Concept Design Review phase in addition to providing more detailed plans, elevations, sections and color and material information for the project. The current drawings are more fully detailed and present a palette of materials that is consistent with the design of the building. Upon reviewing the drawings in detail, staff recommends approval of the application with the conditions of approval outlined above and explained within this report.

BACKGROUND:

On February 25, 2020, the Design Commission approved an application for Concept Design Review for this project and this application is for Final Design Review of the same project. The Commission's Conditions of Approval 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 responses are incorporated into the set of plans included as Attachment A.

Project Overview

- General Plan Designation: Low Commercial Use (0.0-1.0 FAR)
- Zoning: (RM-32, Commercial General)
- Design Guidelines: The applicable design guidelines are the design-related goals and policies in the Land Use Element of the General Plan, and the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-Family Residential Districts.
- Site: The subject site measures approximately 24,019 square feet and is comprised of two rectangular-shaped parcels configured as a double-frontage lot located between Hill and Holliston Avenues. The easterly parcel of the site is located entirely in the CG zoning district and the westerly parcel is divided between the Multi-Family Residential (RM-32) zoning

district to the north, and Commercial General (CG) to the south. The site is currently undeveloped, with no existing structures or trees on the property. The natural grade of the site slopes down approximately 5.5 feet from west to east. It is surrounded by a combination of buildings, chain link fences, and concrete block walls along its perimeter.

- Surroundings: Surrounding properties include a mix of two-story, multi-family residential buildings, one-story commercial vernacular buildings, and older one-story Craftsman style single-family residences. A grouping of one-story residences abut the westerly half of the site's northerly boundary. Adjacent commercial properties to the south and properties located directly across Hill Avenue consist predominantly of automotive service-type buildings ranging between 15 and 20 feet in height. The properties located directly across Holliston Avenue are developed primarily with two-story multi-family residential buildings.
- Project Description: The proposal is for the construction of a new four-story, 58-unit Single Room Occupancy (SRO) development with 47 partial-subterranean parking spaces and a combined gross floor area of approximately 19,140 square feet located at 231 North Hill Avenue between East Walnut Street and Locust Street.
- Site Design: The proposed four-story project consists of two general building masses, which would be separated near the center of the site by communal open space and a pool, all located above a podium (semi-subterranean parking) level. The buildings would have five-foot front setbacks along both frontages (Holliston and Hill Avenues), an approximately six-foot (south) side setback, and a 15-foot (north) side setback along the westerly portion of the site. The buildings' primary facades would be oriented to the east and west, facing Hill and Holliston Avenues, respectively. A one-way driveway would provide vehicular access from Holliston Avenue, at the northwest corner of the property, with egress onto Hill Avenue. Pedestrian access would be available from both of the street facing elevations.
- Architectural Style: Contemporary with references to Caltech campus buildings
- Developer: Hill & Holliston, LLC
- Architects: Tyler + Kelly Architecture
- Landscape Architect: Tyler + Kelly Architecture

ANALYSIS:

Conditions of Concept Design Review:

Below are the Commission's conditions of approval and recommendations from Concept Design Review for the project, as well as the architect's responses and staff's comments. See Attachment A for the complete set of revised plans, elevations, wall sections, architectural details and materials specifications and imagery.

Concept Design Review Conditions, February 25, 2020	Architect Responses	Staff Comment:
<p>1. Revise and refine the articulation of projecting wall volumes, the proportions between solid wall areas and openings, and other architectural features to create a more cohesive design throughout all elevations of each building. On the east building, refine the configuration and proportions of punched openings located at the easterly and westerly portions of the north/south facades.</p>	<p>The architecture of the various elevations is intended to balance programmatic requirements with three unique exposures.</p> <p>The southerly elevations provide access to all SRO units, as well as allowing for exiting needs. Common areas are also arrayed along the South exposure of both buildings, allowing light and air to common amenity areas.</p> <p>The North elevations respond to 2 distinctly different adjacencies: The Westerly building abuts a required 15 ft. setback from the residential uses to the North and is deeply setback on upper floors to provide for sunlight access to the adjacent dwelling.</p> <p>The East building overlooks a commercial building and takes advantage of a wider (N-S) lot dimension as there is no residential zoning district setback requirement. As requested, the north and south ends of the East Building have been revised to create a more cohesive design. Metal screening has been added, and the massing has been offset to accentuate verticality. Paired components are seen extensively throughout the rest of the design.</p>	<p>The condition of approval from Concept Design Review has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>2. Refine the methodology for the connection of the metal screens and stone masonry veneer to the buildings so that they become intentional detailing rather than appearing as being applied onto the buildings.</p>	<p>The metal screening is recessed into its adjacent stucco façade. Detailing for this condition can be found on Sheet A-840.</p>	<p>The revised details show the screens installed with a substantial recess in the wall plane, so that these features appear to be intentional architectural elements, rather than tacked on or applied features.</p> <p>The condition of approval from Concept Design Review has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>

Concept Design Review Conditions, February 25, 2020	Architect Responses	Staff Comment:
<p>3. Large scale landscape and hardscape details (stamped concrete patterns, paver units, color, finish, etc.) shall be provided in the plans submitted for Final Design Review</p>	<p>Large scale landscape and hardscape plans can be found on Landscape sheets L-101 to L-203.</p>	<p>The condition of approval from Concept Design Review has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>4. Incorporate permanent or integrated site amenities, such as engaged wall seating around the tree bases, raised planter beds, and decorative planter bases into the pool deck area and other landscaped spaces. Exterior walkways within the site, including those leading to the dwelling units and walkways between the buildings shall be architecturally treated</p>	<p>Outdoor sofas, side tables, pool seating/lounging, and raised planters are abundant on the 2nd and 4th floors. See Landscape sheets L-202 and L-203.</p>	<p>The plans depict an appropriate program of onsite amenities. Sheets L-101 and 102 also show that the exterior walkways will be treated with integrally colored and scored concrete. The Condition of Approval from Concept Design Review has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>5. Large scale details for all site amenities shall be included in the plans submitted for Final Design Review and these details shall reflect high quality or custom designs.</p>	<p>Details for the exterior of the building have been included in this set.</p>	<p>Manufacturer's specifications and details were provided for appropriate common amenities on separate sheets, but were not integrated into the plan set. Staff recommends a condition of approval that these specifications and details be incorporated into the plan set submitted for a building permit.</p> <p>As conditioned, the Condition of Approval from Concept Design Review will be satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>6. The project shall comply with the conditions provided by the Departments of Housing, Public Works, and Transportation, included in this report as Attachments B, C, and D, respectively, to the satisfaction of said departments. The plans</p>	<p>Noted. Plans shall comply with Departments of Housing, Public Works, and Transportation</p>	<p>The Condition of Approval from Concept Design Review has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>

Concept Design Review Conditions, February 25, 2020	Architect Responses	Staff Comment:
submitted for Final Design Review shall also be re-routed to City Departments and revised conditions, if any, shall be incorporated into the conditions of approval for Final Design Review		
7. The project features and actions indicated on the plans demonstrating consistency with the City of Pasadena Climate Action Plan shall be clearly incorporated into and shown on the plans submitted for Final Design Review.	Noted. Plans shall comply with the City of Pasadena Climate Action Plan.	The condition of approval from Concept Design Review has been satisfactorily addressed.

Concept Design Review Recommendations, February 25, 2020	Architect Responses	Staff Comment:
1. Relocate the laundry room to the central amenity area on the second floor level	The applicant declined to respond to the recommendation	The proposed laundry facility is located near the central amenity area on the second floor level, but is only accessible from the east elevation, not from the central amenity space. The recommendation has not been addressed
2. Consider incorporating patio doors instead of swing doors between units and private patios	The applicant declined to respond to the recommendation	Single swinging doors are proposed. The recommendation has not been addressed.
3. Re-evaluate the use of the Moroccan screen elements along the north building elevations.	The applicant declined to respond to the recommendation	The screened elements are included on the north elevation. The recommendation has not been addressed.

Materials & Colors:

The chosen colors and materials appropriately reinforce the proposed Revival influenced Contemporary architectural style. The proposed buildings are clad in La Habra stucco, with a Santa Barbara Mission finish, in Dunn Edwards DE6211 (Light Beige). Architectural details include the sparing use of a curved stucco profile on the street facing elevations (called out as

#19 on the elevations, but the space for the enlarged detail on Sheet A-840 was left blank), ¼ - inch steel waterjet-cut pedestrian and vehicular gates, and window grilles by Artisan Panel, painted medium bronze to match storefront framing and railings. Architectural detail also include custom window compositions, fiber cement lintels, trim and panels by James Hardie in “Beavertail Brown,” heavy-timber pergolas with concealed connectors, breeze block walls by Orco Block and Hardscape (Cordova 12”x12”x4” pattern) in “White Precision.”

The proposed windows are Anderson 100 Series windows, which are constructed of Fibrex, a proprietary composite material with an integral color, “Terratone,” a medium brow color. Three separate doors specifications are proposed, and are used depending on their locations. The doors include Anderson 200 Series fiberglass clad doors with an integral color, “Terratone,” a solid wood door by TM Cobb, and a steel door with a medium bronze finish. On the street facing elevations, metal framed storefronts with a medium bronze finish by Arcadia with center set clear glazing are proposed.

Staff recommends a condition of approval requiring a more substantial decorative lintel detail be used, as the details for the fiber cement panels on Sheet A-810 do not appear depict that they stand proud from the adjacent wall surface. Staff also recommends a condition of approval requiring the use of additional decorative details, such as the curved stucco profile or the heavy timber pergola at the upper levels of the on the north elevation, or over the open patio serving unit 401D of westerly end of the west building facing the street, to give more visual heft and balance to this elevation. Although a detail for the architectural reveals/screeds is provided on Sheet A-810, staff proposes a condition of approval that they also be clearly depicted in the elevation drawings and details of the plans and provided to staff and for further review to ensure consistency with the overall design. A standard condition requiring consistent metalwork colors, independent of manufacturers’ color names, is also recommended to ensure consistency of metal finishes throughout. Finally, consistent with standard conditions of recent Final Design Review approvals, staff also recommends that a large-scale mock-up panel be provided for staff review during construction to ensure high-quality materials installation.

Mechanical Screening:

The proposed mechanical and utility screening is appropriately concealed within the building, by architectural screening or landscaping or is detailed to blend into the façade. Sheets A-110 and A-140 depict the Fire Department Connection and a backflow preventers in the westerly landscaped front setback area facing N. Holliston Avenue. An undergrounded electrical vault is located at the top of the ramp down to the ground floor parking. These sheets also show other mechanical equipment and utilities such as the boiler room, refuse room, pool equipment, all concealed within the enclosed parking area. The roof plan on Sheet A-145 and details on Sheet A-820 depict placement of vents and mechanical systems on the roofs of the buildings, screened by solid stucco parapet walls. Gas service and meter locations are depicted at the base of the vehicle access ramp, within a landscaped area. Notes calling out through-the-wall penetrations for mechanical vents are shown on the elevation drawings with a reference to the mechanical drawings, but staff was unable to locate the actual detail in the plan set. However, product specifications were provided which show various stainless steel louvered vents and a rounded dryer vent. Therefore, staff recommends a condition of approval requiring a clear detail showing all vents are covered with appropriate quality, integrated vent details that are painted to match the adjacent wall surfaces.

The plans also include four separate details for various balcony configurations (Sheets A-801, Details 7-10). Detail 10 depicts an open railing and will not require overflow drainage. Details 7 – 9 show low stucco walls with railings in varying heights. The floors of these balconies slope toward an internal drain, however, it is possible that these balcony railings may need a provision for overflow drainage to comply with Building Code requirements and staff recommends a condition of approval requiring careful design of these features to ensure that they are integrated into the design of the building.

Landscaping:

The hardscape and landscape plans are detailed on Sheets L-101 through L-301. The proposed development does not include an extensive amount of landscaping, but the proposed hardscaping, amenities and plant palette appropriately reinforces the chosen architectural style and promotes the active use of the shared amenity spaces.

The plans show the ground floor landscaping is limited to the narrow required front yard setback areas facing Hill Avenue and Holliston Avenue, and the parking lot landscaping. At the second floor, landscaping is provided in planters that line the primary walkway and in larger tree wells at the east and west ends of the central amenity space, and at smaller secondary courtyards for the east and set buildings. Additional landscaping in planter boxes is also provided at the third floor. The proposed plant palette includes trees, shrubs, groundcovers and vines that are appropriate to Pasadena's climate. Significant trees include 8, 24-inch box Handroanthus (Pink Trumpet Trees) and 2, 24-inch box Parkinsonia (Mexican Palo Verde). A greater variety of colorful shrubs and vines are proposed in planter boxes. As the City has recently adopted a Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance, the exact specifications for the planting plans will require further review for compliance during plan check.

As noted in the table above, the plans indicate appropriate amenities in the common areas, including site furniture, a pool and spa, barbecue area, outdoor showers and fountains. Staff recommends a condition of approval requiring that the details and specifications for these amenities be included in the plans submitted for building plan check to ensure a high level of quality for these features is maintained throughout the review process.

Lighting:

Exterior lighting plans is depicted on the elevations, with fixture specifications for three types of decorative wall sconces (MENw-600 LED by Lightway, ASPENTI 20 by Tech Lighting and 5706 by Old California Lantern Company). Staff recommends a condition of approval requiring all metalwork to be the same dark bronze color, independent of the different manufacturers' color names. Subject to the standard condition regarding lighting temperature not rising above 3,000 Kelvin, the lighting fixtures proposed are high quality and consistent with the design of the building.

Signage:

Detailed signage plans are not provided for this review. One sign identifying the address of the project is preliminarily depicted in the elevations as an offset metal building sign. Because the Zoning Code requires design review for signs on all new development projects, this proposed new signage will require design review prior to the issuance of a building permit.

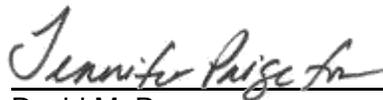
Comments from Other Departments:

During Concept Design Review, the Departments of Transportation and Public Works provided a series of recommended conditions which were incorporated into that previous approval. As noted in the table above, staff recommends repeating this condition of Concept Design Review in this decision to reinforce that compliance with these conditions will continue to be required.

CONCLUSION:

Upon implementation of recommended conditions of approval, the project will comply with the conditions of Concept Design Review. The submitted drawings include materials specifications and architectural details that are high-quality and compatible with the overall building design. Staff recommends that the Commission approve the application for Final Design Review with conditions described in this report, which will be further reviewed by staff during building plan check.

Respectfully submitted,



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Department

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Reviewed by:



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Attachments:

- A. Plans, elevations, details, materials
- B. Product literature