



**PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT**

DATE: JULY 13, 2021
TO: DESIGN COMMISSION
FROM: DAVID M. REYES, DIRECTOR, PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION - NEW CONSTRUCTION OF A SIX-STORY MIXED-USE PROJECT WITH 2,500 SQUARE FEET OF COMMERCIAL SPACE AND 123 SINGLE-ROOM OCCUPANCY UNITS
100 EAST GREEN STREET

Project Description:

This proposal is for the construction of a new six-story, approximately 86,000-square-foot mixed-use project with 2,500 square feet of ground-floor commercial space and 123 residential single-room-occupancy units at 100 East Green Street. The site is located at the southwest corner of East Green Street and South Arroyo Parkway and is comprised of a single 29,787 square-foot lot. The site is currently vacant. There are three palm trees on the site. The species of these palms and the protection status are unknown. In addition, there are six street trees along the site perimeter. The application indicates that the three on-site trees and one street tree are proposed to be removed.

Surrounding properties include commercial, industrial, multi-family residential and mixed-use buildings ranging between one and seven stories in height. The property is in close proximity to both the Old Pasadena and Pasadena Civic Center historic districts. Specific properties within these districts that are in the immediate vicinity include Hotel Green and the Edison/El Rey Building to the west (99 S. Raymond Avenue/50 East Green Street and 87 E. Green Street, respectively) and the Pasadena Civic Auditorium (300 E. Green Street) to the east. In addition, the former Pasadena Winter Garden (now Public Storage) at 171 S. Arroyo Boulevard, which is eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places, is south of the project site. Immediately east of the site is the former Bank Americard Center building, which has been determined to be ineligible for historical designation and is currently undergoing façade modifications that were approved by the Design Commission. Immediately north of the site is a former warehouse building at 45 S. Arroyo Parkway, which was determined ineligible for historical designation in 2000 due to alterations including sandblasting of the building masonry and installation of a new entry. Immediately west of the site is the Metro L Line (former Gold Line) right-of-way.

The proposed new building is designed to adjoin the street edge at the western end of the Green Street frontage and the majority of the Arroyo Parkway frontage, with a private open space area provided at the corner of Green Street and Arroyo Parkway. At this location, there is a street tree with a large canopy, which extends onto the project site. The subterranean

parking plans also show the parking structure set back substantially from Green Street for root protection of this tree; no setback is shown along Arroyo Parkway. The building is also shown set back six feet from the south property line. The ground level plan also shows a developed public open space at the ground-level platform above the Metro L Line immediately west of the site; however, further information about the ability of this space to be developed is needed as it appears to be Metro property not under the applicant's control.

The ground floor of the building is programmed with a commercial space at the northwest corner, a private amenity space at the northeast corner, and parking at the southern end with vehicular access proposed at approximately the middle of the site. The second floor is proposed to cover the entire site, with the exception of the ground-level open space noted above at the northeast corner of the site. An uncovered courtyard open space area is proposed along the west side of the second floor, approximately mid-way along the west façade, with residential units stacked around this courtyard from the second through fifth floors. Roof decks are shown at the sixth floor at the northwest corner of the building (creating a five-story volume along Green Street) and at the center of the site (creating a five-story volume at the east side of the second-floor residential courtyard).

The building is designed in a generally contemporary style with a flat roof, stacked and framed windows and recessed balconies. Proposed materials include a brick base throughout with the northwest corner volume being entirely clad in brick. The materiality of the remaining upper floors is still under consideration but is currently conceived as either fiber-cement panels, smooth plaster or metal panels.

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

Previous/Existing Entitlements:

- None.

Approvals Needed/Project Scheduling:

- Potential Zoning Entitlements depending on demonstrated Zoning Code compliance in future Concept Design Review submittal (Hearing Officer)
- Concept and Final Design Review (Design Commission)
- Building Permits (Building Staff)

CEQA Clearance:

This is preliminary consultation regarding design review and is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

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:

- 4.10: Locate and design buildings to relate to and frame major public streets, open spaces, and cityscape. New development at intersections should consider any number of corner treatments, and should balance safety and accessibility concerns with the vision of the area and the need for buildings to engage the street and create a distinct urban edge.
- 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.
- 10.7: Encourage sustainable practices for landscape materials, landscape design, and land development.
- 23.3: Provide appropriate setbacks, consistent with the surrounding neighborhood, along the street frontage and, where there are setbacks, ensure adequate landscaping is provided.
- 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:

SP 1.3 Discourage developments that are internally focused at the expense of an active street environment, or developments that result in "left-over" space.

SP 1.4 Establish clear pedestrian connections on-site that are well- marked and gracious; direct pedestrians from surface or structured parking to buildings, streets, and public spaces.

SP 2.1 Locate and orient buildings to positively define public streets and civic spaces, such as public plazas; maintain a continuous building street wall and in general limit spatial gaps to those necessary to accommodate vehicular and pedestrian access.

SP 2.4 Permit “eroded” building corners at street intersections sufficient to promote visibility and to allow for the comfortable collection of people.

SP 2.5 Allow large developments to pull back from the street edge for plazas or gracious entry fore-courts, provided street continuity is not unduly interrupted along the majority of the block.

SP 2.4 Permit “eroded” building corners at street intersections sufficient to promote visibility and to allow for the comfortable collection of people.

SP 2.5 Allow large developments to pull back from the street edge for plazas or gracious entry fore-courts, provided street continuity is not unduly interrupted along the majority of the block.

SP 3.1 Encourage the presence of well-defined outdoor space, such as on-site plazas, interior courtyards, patios, terraces and gardens; these are especially encouraged in association with major developments.

SP 3.2 Site outdoor spaces in accordance with the location and scale of adjacent streets, buildings, and uses; for instance, on-site plazas should not unduly interrupt the retail continuity of a street.

SP 3.3 Site outdoor spaces to establish a comfortable transition between the exterior and interior of a building.

SP 3.6 Dimension outdoor spaces to human occupation; they should be proportioned to their surroundings and envisioned use.

SP 3.7 Link adjoining outdoor spaces with comfortable paths and walks to create a network of spaces.

SP 6.2 Incorporate space for retail and pedestrian-oriented uses along the street level facade of a parking garage, especially where pedestrian activity is most desired; parking garages should provide visual interest along the street;

SP 6.5 Screen views of automobiles from public view and adjacent sensitive land uses, including adequate screening for parking garages; dense planting is often an effective screen for surface parking.

BD 1.2 Integrate new development with its surroundings, emphasizing functional and visual continuity while admitting individual expression.

BD 1.4 Complement the architectural character of an adjacent historic building or area; however, imitation of historical styles is discouraged.

BD 1.5 Avoid mimicry of historical architectural styles; new buildings should not appear to have been constructed during a past era, and references to period architecture should be interpreted in a contemporary manner.

BD 1.6 Discourage excessive and overly gratuitous ornamentation that detracts from the visual clarity of Downtown's historic architecture.

BD 1.7 Employ design strategies and incorporate architectural elements that reinforce Downtown's unique qualities; in particular, Downtown's best buildings tend to support an active street life.

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 2.2 Rely on building massing and orientation to place strong visual emphasis on the street and other important civic spaces.

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 2.5 Use articulated sub-volumes as a transition in size to adjacent historic or residential structures that are smaller in scale.

BD 2.6 Vary three dimensional character as a building rises skyward; in general, differentiate between the base, middle and top levels of a building.

BD 2.7 Emphasize the horizontal dimension to make a tall building appear less overwhelming.

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 3.5 Provide a clear pattern of building openings; fenestration should unify a building's street wall and add considerably to a facade's three-dimensional quality.

BD 3.6 Avoid uninterrupted blank wall surfaces along all building facades; the use of opaque and highly reflective glass is also discouraged.

BD 3.7 Encourage the use of recessed windows that create shadow lines and suggest solidity.

BD 4.1 Promote active, pedestrian-oriented uses with a high degree of transparency along the street; uses should be readily discernable to the passer-by.

BD 5.2 Orient main building entrances to directly face the street; buildings that front multiple streets should provide a main entrance along each street.

BD 5.4 Accentuate the entrance(s) to a building's main lobby or interior office space; these main building entrances should be prominent in terms of size, articulation, and use of materials.

BD 5.5 Consider placing the main building entrance at a street corner, where feasible.

BD 5.6 Differentiate a main building entrance from storefront entrances into street level businesses.

BD 5.7 Encourage the use of highly crafted materials or civic art pieces to accentuate the appearance of entrances.

BD 6.1 Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to Downtown; exterior design and building materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to an urban setting.

BD 7.2 Establish a rhythm of vertical elements along the street-level facade; for instance, the regular cadence of display windows and shop entrances enhances the pedestrian experience.

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.

BD 8.1 Express roofs in a visually interesting manner that complements the composition of the building and the surrounding area; sculpted roof forms are encouraged.

BD 8.3 Use a strong, attractively detailed cornice or parapet in conjunction with a flat roof.

BD 9.4 Ensure that ground floor parking is entirely screened from public view, and preferably, that the ground floor integrates active uses along the sidewalk.

BD 9.6 Make sure that pedestrian entries to the parking structure are clearly articulated, and that stairwells and elevators may be identified.

Potential Design Issues:

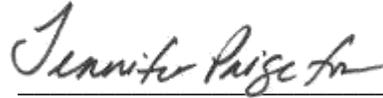
- Explore provision of active ground-floor uses along both building frontages, including the possibility of relocating the residential gymnasium amenity to the street edge. If this is infeasible, further explore the design of the facades along the ground-level parking area. In either case, the goal should be to hide the ground-floor parking and provide pedestrian interest along the street, including a continuous cadence of storefront openings with fewer solid, blank walls facing the street.

- Explore ways to create variation in the building massing to avoid the appearance of a vertical extrusion of the building footprint. To this end, consider reducing structural elements at balconies and consider a height averaging approach that would create a more diverse massing and roofline to the building.
- The building has a strong, solid base element and a clear middle; however, the top of the building should be further studied to be more distinctive from the middle of the building.
- The location of the residential pedestrian lobby is unclear in both plan and elevation. A clear location for a lobby space, with direct access to the street in close proximity to transit, should be provided on the ground floor and this entry should be accentuated architecturally and with high-quality materials and texture.
- Review the fenestration of the building to ensure a consistent architectural presentation and solid-to-void proportion on all facades and respond more clearly to nearby historic resources. In particular, review the proportions of openings at the east end of the north elevation as well as the overall south elevation.
- Ensure that materials transitions occur at inside corners and not in the same wall plane. Provide a detailed transition from the base material to the upper-level materials. Brick should be detailed to appear structural.
- The placement of an open space area along the street to protect a large existing street tree is a positive aspect of the design; however, consideration should be given to allowing public access to some or all of this space and designing it as a usable public plaza or forecourt that is integrated with the adjoining uses within the building. If this is found to be infeasible or undesirable, consider ways to secure the space without creating physical or visual barriers along the street edge and at the street corner.

Project Scheduling/Sequencing:

- Potential Zoning Entitlements
- Concept and Final Design Review by the Design Commission
- Building Permits

Respectfully Submitted,



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Attachments:

- A. Current Planning (Zoning) compliance matrix
- B. Applicant submittal package