



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: AUGUST 10, 2021

TO: DESIGN COMMISSION

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

SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR FINAL DESIGN REVIEW
NEW CONSTRUCTION OF A 17-UNIT, FOUR-STORY, MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WITH TWO LEVELS OF SUBTERRANEAN PARKING
139 SOUTH OAK KNOLL 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 on March 9, 2021, 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 in the Central District Specific Plan; 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. The proposed corbel solution on the south elevation above the driveway entrance shall be further refined so that the decorative corbels, specifically the bracket components, appear more substantial without looking oversized and out of scale.
2. 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.
3. All metalwork, including windows, light fixtures, and railings shall be a consistent color, independent of manufacturers' color names.
4. Comply with the conditions in Attachment B, to the satisfaction of said departments.
5. Provide on the final plans locations of gas meters, which shall be screened from public view to the extent allowed by The Gas Company.
6. An above ground transformer is proposed on in the landscaping on the north elevation. The transformer shall be undergrounded, unless the utility specifies that it cannot be undergrounded.
7. No alterations to the public right-of-way, including alteration or replacement of street trees, are approved as part of this decision.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. The proposed roof trellis be constructed of a material that does not have a faux wood grain.
12. The exact details for the site furnishing and amenities shall be included in the plans submitted for building plan check for staff review and approval.
13. 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.

14. An 8' x 8' minimum mock-up panel of the building finishes shall be provided and reviewed by staff prior to construction and installation.
15. Prior to issuance of a building permit, submit to staff written confirmation from utility providers (Pasadena Water & Power 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.
16. 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 and elevations, with sections and color and material information for the project. The current drawings are more fully detailed than what was reviewed at Concept Design Review and present an appropriate palette of materials that is consistent with the design of the building and the applicable design guidelines. 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 March 9, 2021, the Design Commission approved an application for Concept Design Review for construction of a new four-story, 17-unit residential project with subterranean parking.

Project Overview

- General Plan Designation: Medium Mixed Use (0 – 2.25 FAR) & 0-87 dwelling units per acre.
- Zoning: CD-4 (Central District Specific Plan, Pasadena Playhouse Sub-district)
- 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 in the Central District Specific Plan.
- Site: The subject site is comprised of a single 8,610- square-foot lot at the southwest corner of South Oak Knoll Avenue and Mira Monte Place, between East Green and Cordova Streets. The project site is a rectangular-shaped parcel currently developed with a surface parking lot surrounded by a perimeter concrete block wall built in 1959, all of which are proposed to be demolished. The site was previously developed with a two-story single-family residence estimated to be built in the 1890's and demolished in 1955-1956. There

are three non-protected trees within the site and are all proposed to be removed. There are also seven street trees (palms) in the public right of way, which are proposed to be retained.

- Surroundings: Surrounding properties include single- and multi-family residential buildings ranging between one and four stories in height. Directly adjacent to the west is a one-story single-family residence built in 1898, (710 Mira Monte Place) which was originally part of the subject site and is not a designated or eligible historic resource, according to the Pasadena Central District Survey recorded in August 30, 2000. Directly adjacent to the south is a three-story multi-family residential building with at grade parking built in 1989. To the north, across Mira Monte Place, there is a four-story multi-family residential building with underground parking built in 1994. To the east, across South Oak Knoll Avenue, there is a three-story commercial office building, an at-grade parking lot, and the Immanuel Lutheran Church.
- Project Description: The proposal is for the construction of a four-story multi-family residential development with 17 dwelling units, and 20 subterranean parking spaces located at 139 South Oak Knoll Avenue.
- Site Design: The proposed site design consists of a single building mass with a footprint that would occupy the majority of the site except for the required front and side yard setbacks, a vehicular driveway at the south edge of the property, and an open garden space along the westerly edge. The building's primary facade would be oriented to the east, facing Oak Knoll Avenue; and vehicular access is proposed along the same frontage, at the southeast corner of the property. The secondary façade would face north, toward Mira Monte Place. Pedestrian access would be available from both of the street-facing elevations.
- Architectural Style: Spanish Colonial Revival
- Developer: Balian Investments, LLC
- Architects: Onyx Architects
- Landscape Architect: Armstrong & Walker Landscape 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, March 9, 2021:	Architect Responses	Staff Comment:
<p>1. Additional architectural treatments shall be incorporated into the south and east elevations, to the greatest extent possible, to further resolve the appearance of the projecting unsupported mass over the driveway.</p>	<p>To address the heavy unsupported mass over the vehicle parking ramp, a series of doubled up 6x12 natural wood corbels have been provided to strengthen up the seemingly unsupported cantilevered mass. The corbels run along the length of the overhang and are placed taking the window locations into consideration. While mimicking the wood supports provided on the underside of the balconies, they offer a heavier timber application to offset the larger mass they carry. All corbels will be painted a dark brown color to match the color selection of the aluminum clad wood windows.</p>	<p>The applicants are limited by the development standards from building features that extend to the ground to give a more realistic appearance of supporting the mass above. The proposed solution is inspired by the decorative detailing often found in Spanish Revival designs and conceptually is an appropriate design solution for the issue. However, in this case, while the corbels are substantial, the design of the brackets attached to north elevation do not appear proportionally substantial. Staff recommends that the proposed solution be further refined so that the decorative corbels, specifically the bracket components, appear more substantial without looking oversized.</p> <p>As conditioned, the Condition of Approval from Concept Design Review will be satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>2. 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.</p>	<p>City of Pasadena Climate Action Plan features as listed in the attached checklist are shown on the floor plans. Please see attached completed checklist.</p>	<p>The Condition of Approval from Concept Design Review has been satisfactorily addressed.</p> <p>Staff recommends that this condition be included in this decision to reinforce compliance with the requirements.</p>
<p>3. The project shall comply with the conditions provided by the Departments of Public Works</p>	<p>All Department of Public Works and Department of</p>	<p>The Condition of Approval from Concept Design</p>

Concept Design Review Conditions, March 9, 2021:	Architect Responses	Staff Comment:
<p>(dated June 26, 2020) and Transportation (dated April 17, 2020), included in this report as Attachments D and E, to the satisfaction of said departments. The plans 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.</p>	<p>Transportation conditions have been taken into consideration, and the project will ensure compliance of each item as listed. The conditions of approval for each department have been added to the front end drawing sheets and all conditions that can be addressed on the plans have been incorporated.</p>	<p>Review has been satisfactorily addressed.</p> <p>Staff recommends that this condition be included in this decision to reinforce compliance with the requirements.</p>

Concept Design Review Recommendations, March 9, 2021:	Architect Responses	Staff Comment:
<p>1. The composition of the central volume on the north elevation, consisting of a large solid vertical expanse, the open rooftop balcony railings and the rooftop trellis on the north elevation shall be restudied and revised so that it better reflects the architectural character of the rest of the design.</p>	<p>Several revisions have been incorporated into the north elevation to address these recommendations. The following is a list of changes from the Concept Design Submittal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rooftop trellis has been redesigned with a more appropriate spacing of post and beam configuration and has been shifted to the north (per #2 above), closer to the bordering guardrail. • The guardrail has been reconfigured to step in at the central portion of the elevation and return back into the central post supports of the trellis. A decorative central guardrail element has been introduced to relate back to the similar guardrail detail over the east main entry at the Juliet balcony. Similarly the pattern mimics the new wall opening grilles on the east and west elevations, as well as the divider mullions for the windows at the stair landings on the west stair tower. 	<p>The applicant thoughtfully considered the recommendation and made a series of refinements to the south elevation and rooftop trellis design that has resulted in a better executed south elevation.</p>

Concept Design Review Recommendations, March 9, 2021:	Architect Responses	Staff Comment:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two open trellis shade structures for the central ground level patio in the previous concept design have been modified into a larger single overhanging canopy providing similar sheltering to mimic the underside of the balconies over the two adjacent ground level unit patios. The same corbel treatment has been proposed for continuity to the flanking units. The canopy is topped off with similar concrete barrel roof tiles to relate to the high roof features at the two stair overruns on the east and west elevations. The introduction of this canopy allows for a breakup in overall mass and height of the central element as well as an opportunity to cut back the dark brown recessed portions of walls between the windows. • The previous concept design had dropped window sills at the 2nd level and clerestory window transoms at the 3rd level. This configuration has been reversed to shorten the long span between 2nd and 3rd level windows mitigating the effect of an overly tall central mass. 	
<p>2. Explore extending the rooftop trellis closer to the plane of the façade.</p>	<p>Please see above</p>	<p>Please see above</p>

Materials & Colors:

The proposed materials and colors appropriately reinforce the Spanish Revival influenced Contemporary design, and submitted plans depict details that are also high-quality and consistent with the architectural style of the building.

The primary exterior cladding is a smooth troweled cement plaster by Omega that is integrally colored “Field White,” with accent areas of the same material and finish with an integral color of

tan and a secondary accent of the same material and finish, but painted brown to match the window material. The proposed windows are Sierra Pacific aluminum clad wood window systems in “TW Brown 058” with clear Low-E glazing. The window section details on sheet AA-801 show a sill detail and window recess that is consistent with the design inspiration imagery. The patio doors are also by Sierra Pacific with the same color and glazing details as the windows.

The elevation drawings and enlarged design details depict custom architectural detailing for various precast stone elements on Sheets AA-300 including precast stone details at the east entry and Juliet balconies. The elevations on Sheets AA-301 through 303 and the details on Sheet AA-801 include additional materials and details specifications, including brown painted douglas fir wood balcony corbels and exposed rafters with a rough sawn finish, and decorative 8” x 8” porcelain tiles (Tanzania) above the east entry a GRFC grilles by Pacific Register Co. located in front of bathroom windows and painted to match the adjacent wall surface. The design also includes several small areas with tiled roofs, specified as concrete roof tiles by Boral, with the Santa Barbara profile in the Santa Catarina blend.

As noted previously, the overall materials and color selections are appropriate, however staff recommends several standard conditions of approval to ensure high quality execution of all exterior detailing during the construction phase. The conditions include requiring consistent metalwork colors, independent of manufacturers’ color names, and; consistent with standard conditions of recent Final Design Review approvals, that a large-scale mock-up panel be provided for staff review during construction to ensure high-quality materials installation.

Mechanical Screening:

The proposed design incorporates appropriate screening methods to ensure the various mechanical appurtenances and systems are not publicly obvious and will not detract from the architectural design. The roof plan depicts the placement of mechanical systems on the roofs of the building, behind parapet walls and roof drains that would be concealed within the walls. Mechanical and drainage vents are depicted as both through the roof with some through the wall with vent penetrations on secondary elevations or on side/return walls, not directly facing the street. They are detailed with flush mounted vents that come in pre-finished colors, and are able to be painted to match the adjacent wall surfaces, as depicted on Sheet AA-905. The garage floor plans on Sheets AA-100.P1 and P2 depict the locations of the maintenance areas for the various building systems, including mechanical and electrical rooms, bike storage, elevator equipment and a trash room. The Fire Department Connection is in the setback area facing S. Oak Knoll Ave. Gas service and meter locations are not shown, and staff recommends a condition of approval that they shall be required to be shown in the final plans and screened from public view to the extent allowed by the utility company. An above ground transformer is proposed in the landscaping area along the north elevation. As there does not appear to be any subterranean conflicts at the proposed location of the transformer, staff recommends that it be placed underground, unless the utility specifies that it cannot be located underground.

Landscaping:

The proposed design does not include an extensive landscape design, with the majority found

on the ground floor and rooftop, with a small terrace near the elevator shaft on levels two through four. However, the proposed hardscape and landscaping plans on Sheets LA-101 and LA-105 and the materials specifications on Sheets AA-900 through AA-906 show a restrained design with high quality materials that complement the chosen architectural style. The landscape plans include *Arbutus* “Marina,” and *Cercis occidentalis* (Western redbud) *Citrus*, *Geijera parviflora* (Australain willow) and *Lophostemon confertus* (Brisbane Box) trees, in 24-inch box and 15 gallon sizes. Other shrubs, vines and ground covers are also proposed, including *Bougainvillea* “Rosenka,” *Lavandula stoechas* (Spanish Lavender) and *Macfadyena unguis-cati* (Catclaw vine). The landscape plans incorporate the extensive use of square and round planters in varying sizes by Asian Ceramics. The square and rectangular planters would be made of fiberglass in either grey or white, and the round planters would be made of recycled plastic or polymer in various shades of grey, beige and white.

The hardscape plans show that the open spaces at the ground level and roof deck are designed to be usable spaces and will be programmed with site furniture and amenities that are intended to ensure their active use by residents, such as an outdoor dining table, lounge chairs, a portable barbeque and other small seating areas. The chosen hardscape materials, include precast stone stair treads by Stepstone, Inc, $\frac{3}{4}$ ” travertine stone veneer, in natural tan with a honed finish, precast stone wall caps at the top of the travertine wall caps and wall trim by Stepstone, Tile Tech 2’ x 2’ porcelain rooftop pedestal pavers, porcelain exterior floor tiles at the balcony floors, and ground level by Daltile in chestnut brown. The roof plan depicts the use of Alumawood for the rooftop trellis in “Spanish Brown.” Alumawood is a manufactured embossed aluminum material and the proposed material specification indicates a faux woodgrain finish is proposed for this project. As the applicable guidelines recommend against using manmade materials with faux finishes intended to mimic natural material, staff recommends a condition of approval that the proposed trellis be constructed of a material that does not have a faux wood grain.

The proposed materials, plant selections and programming are appropriate, and the site furnishing and amenities are proposed to ensure the active uses of the open space areas. However exact details for these features were not included in the submittal and to ensure that all details are high quality, staff recommends a condition of approval requiring this information to be provided during plan check for staff review and approval. In addition, as the City has recently adopted a Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance, the planting plans will require review for compliance during plan check.

Aside from the landscape plans on private property, the plans also include tree protection measures and indicate work in the public right-of-way with respect to the street trees. Any aspect of the project that is off-site is not within the purview of the Design Review process and staff recommends inclusion of a condition of approval specifying that any work in the public right of way, including alterations to street trees, is not approved as part of this application review.

Lighting:

The design does not include an extensive amount of exterior lighting, and the proposed lighting fixtures are LED dark sky wall lights by WAC Lighting (Zealous WS-W53614-BZ in a dark bronze finish, and two types of low profile landscape lighting by Mode, in a dark bronze finish are high quality fixtures that are consistent with the design of the building. As previously stated, staff recommends a condition of approval requiring all metalwork to be the same color,

independent of the different manufacturers' color names. Staff also recommends the standard Final Design Review condition regarding lighting temperature not rising above 3,000 Kelvin to reinforce the residential character of the project.

Signage:

Detailed signage plans were not provided for this review and it is unlikely that this size residential project will have a significant amount of signage aside from address and wayfinding signs. Since the Zoning Code requires design review for signs on all new development projects, future signage at this location will require Consolidated Design Review, with the Director being the review authority.

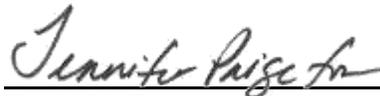
Comments from Other Departments:

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

CONCLUSION:

Upon implementation of the 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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Attachments:

- A. Response to Concept Conditions of Approval Plans, elevations, details, materials
- B. Comments/conditions from other City Departments