



## PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

### STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 14, 2021

**TO:** DESIGN COMMISSION

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

**SUBJECT:** APPLICATION FOR CONCEPT DESIGN REVIEW  
NEW FOUR STORY MEDICAL OFFICE BUILDING WITH SUBTERRANEAN PARKING  
590 SOUTH FAIR OAKS AVENUE  
(CONTINUED FROM AUGUST 10, 2021)

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#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Design Commission:

#### **Environmental Determination**

Find that the application for Concept Design Review was subject to environmental review in the Errata to the Addendum to the Certified Environmental Impact Report certified by the City Council for Conditional Use Permit #6831, which became effective on March 8, 2021, and that that there are no substantial changes to the Project, no substantial changes in the circumstances under which the Project is being undertaken, and no new information of substantial importance that was not known to the Lead Agency at the time the EIR was certified or the time the Addendum was considered that trigger any of the conditions identified in Public Resources Code Section 21166 or State CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 which would require a subsequent or supplemental EIR or MND.

#### **Findings for Compliance with the Tree Protection Ordinance**

Acknowledge that there are no protected trees on the project site.

#### **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 in the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan;

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. All future submittals shall include accurate elevations, renderings, and landscape plans that are internally consistent with each other and contain enlarged details for all exterior features, including but not limited to the canopies, glazing, metal paneling, landscape/hardscape design.
2. The glazing and metal ribbon specifications shall be extensively discussed in the Final Design Review submittal, with multiple alternative products and details presented (accompanied by appropriate drawings, product literature, images, and physical samples). The detailing for the glazing and metal ribbon shall minimize the appearance of joints and mullions, so that the expression of the glazing and metal ribbon maintain their visual prominence.
3. A more thorough discussion of, and enlarged details or illustrations for all publicly visible interior aspects of the project (including interior lighting, partition or cubicle walls, demising walls, structural columns, window treatments, etc.) shall be included in the Final Design Review submittal.
4. The visual prominence of the equipment enclosure and northerly stairwell shall be minimized.
5. The project shall comply with all of the conditions of approval from CUP No. 6831, to the satisfaction of the respective reviewing departments or divisions.
6. The applicant shall include a separate written response to each condition of approval associated with Concept Design Review. Written responses shall be accompanied by illustrated before and after diagrams.

### **BACKGROUND:**

#### **Project Overview**

- General Plan Designation: High Mixed-Use (0.0-3.0 FAR, 0-87 dwelling units per acre)
- Zoning: IG-SP-2 (Industrial General, South Fair Oaks Specific Plan)
- 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 in the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan and the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-Family Residential Districts.
- Site: The project site is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of California Boulevard and Fair Oaks Avenue, with Edmonson Alley directly adjacent to the site to the east. The site is currently developed with a one-story non-historic commercial structure and a surface parking lot. No protected trees have been identified on the property.

- Surroundings: The surrounding context is in transition, with the immediate built environment consisting of surface parking lots, older non-historic, one and two story commercial buildings, and newer three-to-four story medical office buildings, including the Huntington ambulatory surgery center, the HMRI building, and the Shriners for Children Medical Center. A fast food restaurant is directly to the south of the project site on the adjacent property. The Metro light rail line Fillmore Station is also located to the southeast of the project site. There are no historic resources within a four-block radius of the project site. However, there are other historic resources found within the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan area, including the former Southern California Cooperative Wind Tunnel at 950 South Raymond, the Glenarm Power Plant at 72 East Glenarm Street, and the former Pacific Electric Railroad Substation at 1154 S. Fair Oaks Avenue.
- Project Description: The project involves construction of a 99,946, square-foot, four-story medical office building with subterranean parking
- Site Design: The proposed building is situated at the northwesterly corner of the site, closest to the intersection. The building is four-stories in height, with the tallest point at the northwest corner. At the easterly end of the site, the building is set back from Edmondson Alley and a landscaped buffer, passenger drop-off area and pedestrian lobby are located on the east elevation, facing the alleyway. An east-west oriented pedestrian paseo is located to the south of the building and connects the easterly lobby to a mid-block crossing that connects Edmondson Alley to Fair Oaks Avenue. A large pedestrian oriented building entrance is located on the west elevation, facing Fair Oaks Avenue. The vehicular entrance and exit ramp to the subterranean parking is located at the southwest corner of the site, accessible from Fair Oaks Avenue. A large equipment/service enclosure is located at the southwesterly corner of the site.
- Architectural Style: Contemporary/Modern
- Developer: 590 Fair Oaks Development, LLC
- Architects: Smith Group
- Landscape Architect: Smith Group

## **ANALYSIS:**

### **Design Commission Comments from August 10, 2021 Concept Design Review**

On August 10, 2021, the Design Commission reviewed an application for Concept Design Review for this project (Attachment B). After careful review of the proposed plans, the Commission provided detailed comments and requested that the applicant return to the original design intent and vision as presented at Preliminary Consultation. The Commission voted to continue the request to September 14, 2021 to allow the applicant additional time to resolve specified design related issues (Attachment C). The revised plans and narrative response are included in Attachment A.

As depicted in the revised submittal, the design has reverted back to the original design intent of a visually striking modern design that creates the illusion of a levitated mass, punctuated by a

dimensional, serpentine metal ribbon. The revised design more effectively expresses the original design and includes an increased ground floor setback of the east elevation to allow for additional landscaping, which enhances the appearance of the levitated mass. Other significant revisions to the design have been made so that the building better relates to the surrounding context and emphasizes the appearance of the architectural ribbon. These revisions include relocating and re-designing the upper floor terraces to take into account sun exposure that would allow for more practical and comfortable use of the terraces and maximize views of the mountains. The relocation of the terraces to the north and south was also a significant change that maintains the visual continuity of the architectural ribbon. The visual continuity of the architectural ribbon is also enhanced through the revision of the floor-to-floor heights so that they appear equal for all upper floors. Another significant revision to the design switches the window detail from the combination of opaque and fritted glass to an Okalux glazing system consisting of horizontally oriented natural timber grilles hermetically sealed between two panes of energy efficient glass. Speculative renderings of possible interior finishes were also provided.

Upon review of the revised plans and illustrated narrative, the Commission's comments have been satisfactorily addressed. However, because the design and concept for the development is relatively simple, the quality and execution of the finishing details will be critical to ensure the final built product is as striking as the initial renderings. Therefore, staff recommends several conditions of approval to further resolve these aspects of the design and ensure the expression of the glazing and metal ribbon maintain their visual prominence.

**CONCLUSION:**

Staff recommends approval of the application for Concept Design Review for the project with conditions of approval to ensure the appropriate execution of exterior detailing. As conditioned, the project design will satisfactorily address the comments provided by the Design Commission and is consistent with the design guidelines in the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan and the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial & Multi-Family Residential Districts.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Community Development

Prepared by:



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Reviewed by:



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Attachments:

- A. Current plans & elevations
- B. Staff report, plans & elevations dated August 10, 2021
- C. Continuation notice, dated August 11, 2021
- D. Conditions of Approval from Conditional Use Permit #6831
- E. Errata to the Addendum of the certified EIR associated with Conditional Use Permit #6831