



**PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
STAFF REPORT**

**DATE:** APRIL 23, 2019

**TO:** DESIGN COMMISSION

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

**SUBJECT:** PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION - NEW CONSTRUCTION OF A FIVE STORY MIXED-USE PROJECT WITH 9,885 SQUARE FEET OF COMMERCIAL SPACE AND 62 RESIDENTIAL UNITS. PARKING FOR 157 VEHICLES WILL BE PROVIDED WITHIN A GROUND FLOOR AND SUBTERRANEAN STRUCTURE.  
540 SOUTH LAKE AVENUE

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**Project Description:**

This proposal is for the construction of a new five-story mixed-use project with 9,885 square-feet of commercial space and 62 residential units. The irregularly shaped project site is comprised of four lots totaling 41,945 square feet and has frontages facing South Lake Avenue, Granite Drive and East California Boulevard. The site is currently developed with four separate non-historic, one-story buildings built between 1997 and 1999 including 78 surface parking spaces. All of the structures and parking spaces are proposed to be demolished as part of the proposed project. The site is zoned Central District 5 (CD-5).

Surrounding and nearby properties include commercial, institutional and multi-family residential buildings ranging between one and five stories in height, with most of the commercial uses having frontage on South Lake Avenue, and a multifamily development located directly adjacent to the east. Nearby designated historic resources include the South Hudson Landmark District to the southwest of the property, and the Tournament Fields Landmark District, which is directly south of the site, across California Boulevard, and Mentor Court at 937 East California Boulevard, which is a bungalow court listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Other nearby designated historic resources include Bullocks Pasadena at 401 South Lake Avenue, an International/Modern style commercial development listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The proposed building features three radiating building volumes from a central axis. While the volumes share common design elements, such as the basic building form, materials, and colors, each of the three primary building volumes is designed to respond to the various contexts associated with the three different street frontages. The primary commercial building volume of the proposed mixed-use development faces South Lake Avenue and consists of a two-story contemporary style building with influences of Mid-Century architectural styles. This rectangular

shaped building volume occupies nearly the entire width of the lot facing South Lake Avenue and features a primary rectangular building mass with stucco cladding, a large areas of prominent storefront glazing, and a horizontal metal canopy. A taller residential lobby tower with an elevator and stairwell is offset to the southern edge of the building. A stucco-clad five-story volume rises in the background and is significantly set back from South Lake Avenue. To the south of the primary South Lake Avenue facing elevation, portions of the California Blvd. oriented building volume are also visible from South Lake Avenue, and, this stucco-clad rectangular volume is characterized by a single-loaded covered walkway.

The Granite Drive elevation features a mixed-use building volume including the only vehicular access for the entire project. This building volume consists of a collection of vertically oriented rectangular masses characterized by projecting and recessed balconies, large areas of glazing and rhythmic, recessed fenestration. At the ground floor, a large commercial storefront is separated from a two-story residential lobby by a wide two-way driveway leading to ground level and subterranean parking. A metal canopy runs the length of the storefront and extends over the driveway. Above the storefront, a five story volume rises. This volume is characterized by a wide expanse of four-story tall glazing, topped by a thin dark metal canopy. Three projecting balconies emerge offset from this glazing. A further recessed five-story volume is located to the east of this volume, and is characterized by vertical bands of windows with recessed and projecting balconies, with the top floor featuring a covered balcony and horizontal siding. Another recessed taller five-story volume is located to the east of the previously mentioned volume and features stucco cladding and a narrow column of vertically oriented windows.

The south facing (California Boulevard) building volume graduates in height from two stories (including a partially subterranean basement floor P-1) at California Boulevard up to four stories at the northern portion of the volume. This volume is directly adjacent to a one-story bungalow court listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Mentor Court at 937 East California Boulevard). The building volume is set back a minimum of ten feet from Mentor Court and consists of graduated stucco clad rectangular masses with recessed windows and metal window canopies, with the entry mass clad in horizontal siding. The south facing elevation also has a large covered deck above the second story. The east elevation features a series of vertically oriented window groupings, recessed and projecting balconies, and covered patios. Similar to the other elevations, the recessed portions of the top floor feature horizontal siding. Small areas of vertical siding separate some of the window groupings between the ground floor and the second floor.

In general, all of the building volumes are designed in a generally contemporary style with primarily stucco cladding including some accent areas of horizontal or vertical siding, flat roofs, repeating projecting and recessed building volumes, stacked punched openings and projecting metal canopies.

**Applicable Design Guidelines:**

- Design-Related Goals and Policies in the Land Use Element of the General Plan
- Central District Specific Plan Private Realm Design Guidelines, including the Lake Avenue Sub-District Design Guidelines

**Previous/Existing Entitlements:**

- An application for Predevelopment Plan Review (PPR) is currently in process for this project.

**Approvals Needed/Project Scheduling:**

- The applicant may request an Affordable Housing Concession Permit (to be determined) (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 Private Realm Design Guidelines:***

BD 6.2 Use materials, colors, and details to unify a building's appearance; buildings and structures should be built of compatible materials on all sides.

BD 6.3 Design architectural features that are an integral part of the building, and discourage ornamentation and features that appear "tacked-on" or artificially thin; this applies to balconies, canopies and awnings, as well as exposed rafters and beams, moldings, downspouts, scuppers, etc.

BD 6.4 Employ especially durable and high-quality materials at the street level, encouraging those materials that show permanence and quality, minimize maintenance concerns, and extend the life of the building; examples of appropriate building materials for use at the street level include: stone, terra-cotta or tile, metal, brick and transparent glass.

BD 6.6 Limit the number of materials and colors used on the exterior of an individual building so that there is visual simplicity and harmony; intense color should be used only as an accent or as part of a carefully executed and balanced color scheme.

BD 7.1 Distinguish the ground level of a building from the upper levels of a building, especially where a building orients to the street and/or defines public space.

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 7.5 Show creativity and individual expression in the design of storefronts, and encourage shop windows that reveal multi-layered displays and shifting patterns of activity.

BD 7.6 Provide overhead cover along the sidewalk for pedestrian comfort, especially where there are few mature street trees; canopies and awnings are encouraged.

BD 7.7 Size exterior light fixtures, canopies and awnings to the scale of the building and sidewalk.

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

UR 1.6 Provide a shallow setback and a minor grade separation between the first floor and sidewalk where residential uses occupy the ground floor; this will promote privacy and also accommodate entry porches and stoops.

UR 2.5 Make ground floor commercial uses visually distinct from the residential space above; residential entrances should read differently from entrances to ground floor commercial uses.

UR 2.6 Encourage the use of generous windows that are predominantly transparent glass for ground floor commercial uses within otherwise residential buildings.

***Lake Avenue Sub-District Design Guidelines:***

Site Planning Guideline 2: Build Street Continuity. An active commercial street relies on a consistent street-oriented frontage that draws pedestrians down the sidewalk. Therefore, minimize breaks in the building street wall.

Site Planning Guideline 3: Include Outdoor Rooms. Outdoor rooms should become a more distinctive component of the Sub-district. In particular, provide spaces that further serve pedestrian comfort and mobility, for instance, gracious pathways that connect street, buildings and parking facilities.

Building Design Guideline 1: Promote Visual Harmony. Visual harmony and a sense of place may be achieved by emphasizing the simplicity and clarity that is characteristic of many buildings along Lake Avenue (including late Moderne and International Style precedents). New construction should focus on these qualities.

Building Design Guideline 2: Express Individual Storefronts. A variety of storefronts adds richness and vitality to the street, and therefore, individual shops should be expressed. Transparent windows simply and effectively add three-dimensional interest; awnings and signage may also differentiate storefronts.

**Potential Design Issues:**

- Study how the massing and architectural character of the development is compatible with the surrounding context and the architectural character and legacy of Pasadena. Consider incorporating more Modern architectural style elements into the design. The South Lake Avenue frontage successfully incorporates Modern design elements that resonates with the Modern architectural legacy of the surrounding context.
- Study the composition of architectural elements such as, window sizes and type, eyebrow canopies, and recessed or projecting balconies, in each building volume to ensure consistency in the use of said architectural elements. Continue to explore the use/ placement of vertically oriented window compositions and explain how they relate to the horizontal emphasis of the single loaded corridors and the upper floor cladding treatments.
- Study additional ways to create variation or distinction in the roofline, possibly by introducing upper level open space to break up the massing or, introducing a more

significant cornice piece. A thin cornice piece appears to be the only roof/wall connection and it is only used sparingly and not on all building volumes.

- Further study, or more clearly explain, the relationship between the basement floor P-1 and the ground floor to California Boulevard and ensure the unit entries facing California Boulevard are aligned with the street level or are slightly elevated. There should not be any sunken entryways.
- Further study the vehicular driveway from Granite Drive, to ensure that it is both well integrated into the project design and appropriately separated from the adjacent residential lobby and commercial space. The current use of the canopy blends the appearance of the commercial space and driveway together. Ensure that the publicly visible portions of the interior of the driveway entrance are detailed to avoid utility clutter and inappropriate lighting. Clarify the access control methods for the driveway in future submittals.
- Further study the scale of the parking entrance to better relate to the scale of the other openings facing Granite Drive.
- Provide a more prominent residential lobby for the mixed-use portion of the project facing South Lake Avenue. Consider adding more glazing to the proposed lobby volume or enlarging the second floor window. Study additional means to visually or physically separate the residential lobby facing Granite Drive from the vehicular driveway for the project. Consider revising or omitting the canopy that extends over the storefront and the driveway.
- Study ways to make the storefront facing Granite Drive more distinct in appearance from the driveway entrance and, from the residential portions of the building. Explain in future submittals the pedestrian access to the commercial storefront and the separation of pedestrians from vehicular traffic.

**Project Scheduling/Sequencing:**

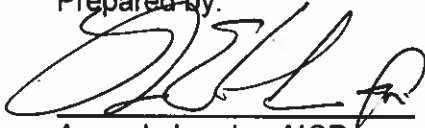
- The project may require an Affordable Housing Concession Permit (To be determined) (Hearing Officer)
- Concept and Final Design Review (Design Commission)
- Building Permits

Respectfully Submitted,



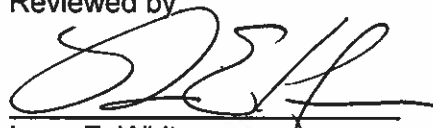
David M. Reyes  
Director of Planning & Community Development Department

Prepared by:



Amanda Landry, AICP  
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Reviewed by:



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Principal Planner

**Attachments:**

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

## Code Compliance Matrix

<b>Address:</b>				
540 South Lake Avenue				
<b>APN:</b>				
5327-002-001, 5327-001-010, 5327-001-011, 5327-001-012, 5327-002-007, 5327-002-008				
<b>Zoning Designation:</b>				
CD-5 (Central District, Lake Avenue Sub-district)				
<b>General Plan Designation:</b>				
Medium Mixed Use (0.0 – 2.25 FAR, 0-87 DU/acre).				
<b>Proposed Development Standards:</b>			<b>Code Req.</b>	<b>Meets Code</b>
Gross Lot Size:	41,945	Sq. Ft.	N/A	
Size of East Portion of the Site:	15,895	Sq. Ft.	N/A	
Proposed Building Size on East Portion:	27,680	Sq. Ft.	27,816 Sq. Ft.	Yes
Floor Area Ratio (FAR) On East Portion::	1.74		1.75 (Max)	Yes
Size of West Portion of the Site:	26,050	Sq. Ft.	N/A	
Proposed Building Size on West Portion:	51,916	Sq. Ft,	52,100 Sq. Ft.	Yes
Floor Area Ratio (FAR) On West Portion:	2.00		2.00 (Max)	Yes
<b>Ground Floor Housing:</b>				
East Portion of the Site	Proposed		Allowed	
West Portion of the Site	Not Proposed		Not Allowed	
Housing shall not exceed more 50% of the total floor area				
East Portion of the Site	N/A		N/A	
West Portion of the Site	74	%	Required	No
<b>Density:</b>				
Maximum Allowed Base Density:	63.3	Units/Acre	48 Units/Acre	
Maximum Number of Units	61	Units	48 Units	
Number of Affordable Units	Information Not Provided		5 Units	Cannot Be Determine



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<b>Proposed Development Standards:</b>			<b>Code Req.</b>	<b>Meets Code</b>
Provided:				
Percentage of Affordable Units:	Information Not Provided		10%	Cannot Be Determine
Density Bonus Requested:	32.5	%	32.5 %	
Number of Density Bonus Units:	15	Units	15 Units	
Maximum Permitted Number of Units w/ Provision of Affordable Units	61	Units	61 Units	
Setbacks:				
Lake Avenue	0	Ft.	Build to Property Line	Yes
Granite Drive:	Not Dimensioned	Ft.	Build to Property Line	Cannot Be Determine
California Blvd:	10	Ft.	Min 5'-0", may be set back to 10'-0" max	Cannot Be Determine
Interior Side:	10	Ft.	None Required	Yes
Height:	66.5	Ft.	40 Ft.	No
Parking Calculations				
<i>Restaurant Space (3,903 SF)</i>	35		<i>7.5 spaces/1,000 sf (25% per Section 17.50.340.D.1.b)</i>	
<i>Office Space (3,903 SF)</i>	9		<i>2.25 spaces/1,000 sf (10% per Section 17.46.340.D.1.b)</i>	
<i>Physical Fitness (2,079 SF)</i>	9		<i>4.5 spaces/1,000 sf (10% per Section 17.46.340.D.1.b)</i>	
<i>Residential 0-1 Bedroom Units (22 units)</i>	22		<i>1 space per unit</i>	
<i>Residential 2-3 Bedroom Units (39 units)</i>	78		<i>2 spaces per unit</i>	

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Total Number of Parking Spaces Required	153	Total Number of Parking Spaces Provided	156	Yes