

Memorandum

DATE 6/22/20
NAME Kevin Johnson
COMPANY City of Pasadena Planning & Community Development Department,
Design & Historic Preservation Section
ADDRESS 175 North Garfield Avenue
CITY, STATE, ZIP Pasadena, CA 91101

FROM Naseema Asif

REGARDING **Response to the Design Commission's Comments**
For the renovation project at 101 S. Marengo, Pasadena, CA 91101

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As part of our design process for the renovation of the former Bank of America Building at 101 S. Marengo Avenue, originally designed in 1973 by the office of Edward Durrell Stone, we reviewed the Design Commission's comments regarding the renovation schemes presented by the previous owner and as documented in the letters dated 1/31/19 and 5/2/19. The letters note the iconic nature of the existing building and site within the landscape of downtown Pasadena, and suggest that the design team could either explore a more playful design of the facades, or approach the redesign in a way "that respects the monolithic, iconic quality of the existing building."

We began our design process by researching precedent within Edward Durrell Stone's work, noting that his façade designs often featured a continuous patterning wrapping all four elevations, with vertically oriented fenestration. Local examples of this can be seen at the Home Federal Savings Building in Beverly Hills, and at Waite Phillips Hall on the USC Campus.

Our proposed design celebrates the unique travertine monolith of the existing structure and introduces new vertically oriented openings, in a regular pattern, in response to the inspiration we found in the noted precedent projects. The new projected curtainwalls span across floors to maintain the singularity of the travertine volume, while introducing daylight into the space. Solid stone cladding is retained at the corners to emphasize the monolithic nature. The new curtainwall panels are intended to have clear glazing.

In addition, the façade design reinforces an axial orientation to the building, addressing another Design Commission comment. The east and west facades share a regularized pattern of solid stone and projected curtainwall, while the north and south facades maintain a central expanse of solid stone where the existing cores are located. On the north elevation, we have introduced a narrow slot window to give the impression of having carved this opening out of a solid stone block.

The Design Commission suggested cutting away portions of the building to create light wells and bring landscape within the building. We also have the challenge of transforming the existing large floor plates designed for a processing center to a scale more appropriate for a contemporary office program. Our design therefore introduces a new 60' x 60' courtyard into the center of the building, bringing light and views of landscape planting deep into the space. Along with the introduction of operable windows on the exterior elevations, the new courtyard allows for ventilation throughout the interior, transforming the existing stone monolith into a "breathing" building.

Finally, the Design Commission suggested that a renovation of the building should include enhancements to the site to make it more inviting for pedestrians, including the stairwell at the northwest corner of the site. As the Gold Line Station is located a few blocks west of the property, our team acknowledges it is important to provide tenants and visitors who may arrive via Metro a pleasant experience when accessing the site. We are introducing a series of planters and seating elements along the north side of the site, creating the experience of walking through a Southern California meadow, that connects pedestrian circulation from both sides of the site to the main north entry to the building. Further, new grab-and-go food and coffee carts are planned for the Plaza, to provide further amenities for both tenants and visitors. Enhancements to the Plaza will also feature a renovation of the existing fountain designed by Ralph Cornell, maintaining its striking iconic form, while transforming it into a living fountain.

In summary, our proposed redesign seeks to enhance the existing iconic forms of the travertine monolith and star shaped fountain, while creating an environment that promotes wellness in the work environment and on site.