



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: JULY 14, 2020

TO: DESIGN COMMISSION

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

SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR FINAL DESIGN REVIEW
NEW CONSTRUCTION OF A TWO-TO-THREE-STORY, 75-UNIT
RESIDENTIAL PROJECT
135 SOUTH CATALINA 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 November 12, 2019, 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 following proposed deviation from the multi-family residential development standards is necessary to preserve the existing building at 960 E. Green Street (Thatcher Medical Building):
 - a. Lack of a tree well extending to natural soil within the Main Garden;

3. 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, the Design Guidelines in the Central District Specific Plan and the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-Family Residential Districts; and,
4. Based on these findings, approve the application for Final Design Review (as shown in Attachment A) subject to the following conditions, which shall be subject to staff review and approval prior to issuance of a building permit unless otherwise stated:

Conditions:

1. The areas of tan stucco on the north elevation shall be changed to brick to better relate to the adjacent Thatcher Medical Building and the east elevation of the building. Soffits and side walls of the pedestrian and parking portals at this location shall either be clad in the same brick material or painted a compatible color to be reviewed and approved by staff during project construction.
2. All visible soffits, including at balconies, shall be painted to match the adjacent wall surface/fascia material as closely as possible.
3. Provide further details of the height, design and materials of the parking ramp side walls and any gates that may be visible from the street. Any mechanical equipment, piping, conduit, utilities or other similar features within the parking entry portal shall be screened from public view and any visible walls or ceiling of the portal shall be finished in a high quality manner that is consistent with the design and finishes of the building.
4. All window and door frames shall be recessed a minimum of 2" from the exterior walls.
5. Brick window and door header details shall be revised to specify use of soldier course corner bricks, and brick window sill details shall be revised to specify use of rowlock course corner bricks. Provide brick corner details demonstrating use of manufactured corner bricks at all brick-clad corners.
6. The plans submitted for a building permit shall demonstrate that all mechanical venting (laundry, kitchen, bathroom & garage exhaust) will be routed to the roof and that no through-the-wall vents will be used. If Building Code requirements require venting through exterior walls, they shall be located in the least publicly visible locations possible and away from courtyard elevations to the greatest extent feasible and details and specifications of vent covers shall be provided that ensure that they are integrated into the design of the building with no exposed flashing.
7. The landscape plans shall be further coordinated with the architectural site/ground floor plan to include the proposed locations of utilities to ensure that the proposed landscape material will adequately screen them from public view.
8. Provide architectural details and materials specifications of the proposed infinity-edge water feature.

9. A separate Consolidated Design Review application for signage shall be submitted for review and approval prior to installation of project name and parking signage.
10. 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.
11. The Vibration Management Plan that was included as Exhibit 6 to the Environmental Noise Report for the project prepared by Michael Baker International and dated November 2019 shall be incorporated into the plans submitted for a building permit and the specified vibration monitoring equipment shall be installed on the site in the locations prescribed in the plan, and their installation shall be satisfactorily demonstrated to staff, prior to issuance of a building permit.
12. Comply with the conditions in Attachment B provided by all reviewing departments/divisions, to the satisfaction of said departments/divisions.
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. An 8' x 8' minimum mock-up panel of the building finishes shall be provided and reviewed by staff prior to the installation of exterior materials. At a minimum, the mock-up shall accurately depict transitions from brick to stucco, brick and stucco window opening details, all brick courses and corners and metal fins and cornices.
16. 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, or alternative location requirements are depicted in the plans and adequately screened.
17. 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, elevations, sections and color and material information for the project. The current drawings are more fully detailed and present a palette of materials that is consistent with the design of the building.

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 November 12, 2019, the Design Commission approved an application for Concept Design Review for construction of a new two-to-three-story, 75-unit residential project at 135 S. Catalina Avenue. This application is for Final Design Review of the same project.

Project Overview

- General Plan Designation: Medium Mixed Use (0-2.25 FAR; northerly three lots) and High Density Residential (0-48 DU per acre; southerly two lots)
- Zoning: CD-5 (Central District Specific Plan, Lake Avenue Subdistrict; northerly three lots) and RM-48 (Multi-Family Residential, 48 units per acre; southerly 2 two lots)
- 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 Central District Specific Plan (northern portion of the site) and the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-Family Residential Districts (southern portion of the site).
- Site: The site is comprised of five adjoining lots totaling approximately 1.21 acres on the west side of S. Catalina Avenue between E. Green Street and Cordova Street. The project site is rectangular in shape and is currently a vacant surface parking serving the Thatcher Medical Building. A tree inventory provided with the application identifies eight trees on site, none of which are protected trees, as well as one street tree along the Catalina Avenue frontage.
- Surroundings: Surrounding properties include one- to two-story commercial and office uses along Green Street, two- to three-story multi-family residential uses along South Catalina Avenue and one- to three-story commercial, office and multi-family residential uses, as well as a four-story parking structure, along South Mentor Avenue. The historic Thatcher Medical Building, constructed in 1947 and 1961 and a contributing structure to the Green Street Village Landmark District, is immediately adjacent to the north. The historic Constance Hotel is also in close proximity to the project at the southwest corner of E. Colorado Boulevard and S. Mentor Avenue.
- Project Description: The project involves the construction of a new two-to-three-story, 75-unit residential project with three levels of subterranean parking (including replacement of existing parking serving the Thatcher Medical Building). As the project developer also owns the Thatcher Medical Building, the proposal also includes creation of an emergency drop-off and short-term at-grade parking spaces between the existing and proposed buildings.
- Site Design: The project is designed to include two buildings: a large, three-story U-shaped building and a smaller, two-story rectangular building within the opening of the larger U-shaped building, creating three distinct building volumes along South Catalina Avenue. As

noted above, an at-grade motor court and short-term parking serving the Thatcher Medical Building are proposed north of the proposed new buildings; vehicular access to the subterranean parking structure for both the existing office and proposed new residences is proposed between the northerly wing of the U-shaped building and the north façade of the smaller rectangular building. An interconnected L-shaped courtyard is proposed between the remaining portions of the U-shaped building and the rectangular building; a pedestrian pathway and breezeway is proposed to extend from this courtyard north to the motor court and Thatcher Medical Building. The proposed building is set back approximately 45' from the south façade of the Thatcher Medical Building, between approximately 10' and 20' from the west property line, approximately 18' from the south property line and between approximately 10' and 20' from the east property line along S. Catalina Avenue.

- Architectural Style: Contemporary
- Developer & Architects: Adept Architecture
- Landscape Architects: Korn Randolph 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, November 12, 2019:	Architect Responses	Staff Comment:
1. Continue to study design elements to create greater compatibility with the adjacent Thatcher Medical Building. This could include such measures as differentiating the top floor from the lower two floors of the three-story building, expressing projecting bay windows, demonstrating compatible fenestration proportions, incorporating roofed balconies and reconsidering railing designs, creating compatible open spaces, and/or other measures demonstrated to the Commission in the	“The 3-story volume on the North side has been explored with different architectural and materiality treatment and disposition to create greater compatibility with the adjacent Thatcher Medical Building. By capping the brick wall with a grey stucco parapet to mimic the differentiation between the grey mansard roof and the brick wall over Thatcher, this building volume now responds better to the formality of Thatcher Building as well as the material disposition between the upper and lower façade. Trellises are also added to the top floor balcony to speak to the roofed balconies on Thatcher’s 2nd Floor. Please see View 10 on page 78.	The changes that have been made to the northerly building volume have improved the building’s compatibility with the Thatcher building while also further differentiating this volume from the other two volumes along Catalina Avenue. Staff recommends that the formality of the east elevation of this volume be continued to the north elevation directly opposite the Thatcher building. On this elevation, areas of tan stucco appear to be incorporated in-plane with areas of brick and grey stucco and staff finds that

Concept Design Review Conditions, November 12, 2019:	Architect Responses	Staff Comment:
<p>drawings submitted for Final Design Review. The project shall also be redesigned to incorporate additional architectural variation of the various building volumes along the streetscape.</p>	<p>Vertical architectural elements are also added next to the windows to create a modernist response to the window shutters over Thatcher's. The same technique is applied for the vertical pipe railing at the balcony in response to the vertical wrought iron metal railing of Thatcher's. See page 43.</p> <p>Please review Page 6, 7, 43, 44 for the demonstration of fenestration and massing proportion compatibility between the new building and the existing Thatcher."</p>	<p>these tan stucco areas create a disconnect between the project and the Thatcher building. Although this material is also used on the east elevation, it is used in deeply recessed wall areas at balconies at that location. Continuing the brick application in the tan stucco areas of the north façade would improve the project's connection to the Thatcher building and to the east façade of the project at this location and staff has recommended a condition of approval requiring this to be changed. Upon implementation of this condition, staff finds that this condition will be addressed.</p>
<p>2. Explore greater variety of architectural and materiality treatment and disposition between the three volumes of the east elevation.</p>	<p>"The volume on the North side has been redesigned to express its compatibility with the adjacent Thatcher Building, the middle building volume has been lowered to 2-story building, resulting in 3 different building façade designs, but still speak to one another and to the existing Thatcher Building. Please see East Elevation on page 37."</p>	<p>The changes to the northerly volume have created greater variety between the three volumes along Catalina Avenue while retaining a consistent palette and character. Staff finds that this condition has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>3. Reduce the finish floor height at the southern end of the site to the greatest extent feasible and reduce the extent and height of solid planter walls within the front yard of the entire site frontage to ensure a more compatible front yard design in comparison to the surrounding context. In addition, redesign the solid front porch walls to incorporate additional transparency. Provide for Final Design Review additional building sections</p>	<p>"The finish floor height at the southern end of the site has been lowered 1 foot 9 inches compared to the finished floor height at the northern end of the site. See Section 1, page 35. The change in elevation happens at the zoning line between the RM-48 and CD-5. This is the greatest extent feasible due to the "partially subterranean parking" requirements and the main garden height restriction. See Section 1-5, page 36 for the relationship of the building's finish floor height and planter wall within the front yard to sidewalk grade along the street frontage.</p>	<p>In comparing the current building sections to those provided during Concept Design Review, the proposed 1'- 9" lowering at the southern end of the site was also shown in the Concept Design Review drawings; therefore, the finished floor height has not changed in response to this condition of approval. It may not be feasible for the finished floor height to be further lowered without triggering additional Zoning Code requirements that</p>

Concept Design Review Conditions, November 12, 2019:	Architect Responses	Staff Comment:
<p>to demonstrate the relationship of the building's finish floor height and planter walls within the front yard to the sidewalk grade at multiple locations along the project frontage.</p>	<p>The front solid porch wall has been re-design to incorporate some railing section to create additional transparency. See East Elevation, page 37.”</p>	<p>would have the potential to cause additional changes to the design. The change to the front porch design to incorporate open railings satisfies the intent of the condition by allowing for more openness within the front yard. As such, staff finds that this condition has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>4. The parking garage access ramp shall be softened and visually minimized with open fencing rather than solid walls above grade, landscaping, materials and lighting. Provide sections and details for Final Design Review to further demonstrate and define the design of the parking garage access ramp.</p>	<p>“Trellis is added at the entry ramp and planters have been incorporated on both side of the parking ramp. These planters will be planted with green ivy to screen the wall and soften the appearance of the parking ramp entrance. Please see Section 2, page 36.”</p>	<p>The measures described by the applicant address some of the requirements of this condition of approval; however, open fencing was not incorporated into the design and the proposed materials and lighting are unclear in the submitted drawings. Staff finds that the inclusion of vines along the wall satisfies the intent of the condition, which is to soften the appearance of the parking ramp. Staff also recommends a condition of approval requiring additional details for the parking ramp and any gates that may be visible from the street to be submitted for further review by staff prior to issuance of a building permit. With this condition implemented, staff finds that this condition will be adequately addressed.</p>
<p>5. Provide amenities to ensure usability of the project's open spaces. Carefully study the design of the open spaces to include such features as outdoor cooking/eating space, water and/or fire features, site furniture, focal elements, etc. Specialty paving shall be used to</p>	<p>“The Lobby and Club house area has been re-design and expanded to create more space for more activities such as club space, kitchenette and a BBQ space at the Patio on the West. The Main Garden and Central Court are intended for social spaces only, and not for outdoor cooking. This expansion of the Lobby and the Club house creating an opportunity for the</p>	<p>The amenities provided in the open spaces and adjoining the communal interior spaces are sufficient for a project of this size. Staff finds that this condition has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>

Concept Design Review Conditions, November 12, 2019:	Architect Responses	Staff Comment:
soften the walkways and gathering spaces.	central court and the main garden meet in front the Lobby entries. There is a circular planter at the focal point where the central court and the main garden meets. Seating areas are arranged along the infinity-edge water feature in the center of the Central Court. Different specialty pavers are used to shape the spaces and differentiate the gathering areas to the walkways, creating a sense of direction and scale for the pedestrians. See the Ground Floor Plan on page 26 and perspective view 3 - 6 on page 76 & 77.”	
6. All residential units aligning the common courtyards shall have direct pedestrian access from the units to the courtyards.	“All the units aligning the common courtyards (except Unit 120, 121, 122) have direct pedestrian access to the courtyard. Reason not to provide direct access for Unit 120-122 is to maximize the use of the central court area.”	Most of the units adjoining the courtyard have direct access to it. Requiring units 120-122 to have direct access to the courtyard would trigger elimination of a planter and seating areas adjacent to a water feature; therefore, staff finds that the intent of the condition has been satisfied by providing direct access to most of the adjoining units.
7. If allowed by the Building Code, incorporate natural lighting into the stairwell from the parking structure to the ground level at the northern end of the building.	“The stairwell at the northern end of the building is served as an egress staircase that needs to be fire-rated, therefore it is not feasible to incorporated natural lighting into stairwell.”	Incorporating natural lighting into a fire-rated stair is not allowed by the Building Code; therefore, compliance with this condition is not required.
8. Further study the location and design of materials transitions to ensure that the building walls articulate in plane in conjunction with changes in wall materials, creating a greater sense of depth on the building facades. Alternatively, simplify the materiality of the building in response to the simple materials of the adjacent Thatcher Medical Building, and explore brick	“Please see wall details on page 48-60 for the materials transition within the wall plane. We also studied brick course pattern of the Thatcher Building and applied similar concept of having rowlock course at certain datum lines to break up the brick façade. Please see page 44.”	Staff has reviewed the wall sections provided and finds that the majority of material transitions occur at locations where walls articulate rather than within the same plane. The exception to this is on the north elevation, which is described in staff’s response to condition #1 above. The addition of rowlock courses into the brick patterning of the

Concept Design Review Conditions, November 12, 2019:	Architect Responses	Staff Comment:
<p>coursing patterns and other horizontal transom or datum lines that respond to the patterns of the historic building.</p>		<p>building responds well to the Thatcher Medical Building; however, the application of these small brick veneer pieces should be reviewed in the field to ensure a high-quality installation. Staff has recommended a condition of approval requiring a large-scale mock-up of the building materials to be constructed and reviewed by staff prior to application of exterior materials to the building. With this condition implemented, staff finds that this condition is satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>9. Study the landscaping depicted in historical photographs of the Thatcher Medical Building and restore the original landscape design to the greatest extent feasible.</p>	<p>“Please see Landscape page 80-87.”</p>	<p>The landscape architect found undated photographs of the Thatcher Building courtyards, which depict much of the same landscaping that exists in place today. Original plans or dated historical images of the courtyard have not been found; therefore, it is unknown whether the existing landscaping is the original design. The proposal would retain existing Cypress trees and replace existing shrubs to match. Staff finds that the applicant team has conducted sufficient research to attempt to determine the original landscape design and, based on the undated photographs found, replacement with matching materials is an appropriate approach. As such, this condition has been satisfied.</p>

Concept Design Review Conditions, November 12, 2019:	Architect Responses	Staff Comment:
<p>10. The project shall comply with all applicable Zoning Code requirements, including required parking. Comments in Attachment A from staff of the Current Planning Section and the Departments of Public Works and Transportation shall be addressed to staff's satisfaction prior to submitting an application for Final Design Review. Changes in massing, site design or general architectural character that are required to comply with Zoning Code requirements may also require submittal and review of an application for Changes to an Approved Project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Parking: Existing Surface Parking of the Thatcher Medical Building is 202 spaces. We will provide a 1-1 replacement for the off-street parking which is 202 parking spaces. • Tandem Parking: We will apply for the Minor Conditional Use Permit. • Open Space: Please see page 30-34 for the Net Floor Area and the Open Space plan. • Density: The plan has been revised to house 23 residential units on RM-48 site. • Main Garden: Please see page 19 • Partially Subterranean Parking: Please see section 1 on page 36." 	<p>Staff routed the Final Design Review plans to the Current Planning Section for review and one outstanding issue was identified as being non-compliant with Zoning Code requirements (lack of a tree well extending to natural soil within the Main Garden). Please see further discussion of this issue on page 13 of this report.</p> <p>Staff recommends that this condition be repeated in this decision to ensure that the requirements of other City departments are addressed to the satisfaction of those departments.</p>

Concept Design Review Recommendations, November 12, 2019:	Architect Responses	Staff Comment:
<p>1. Explore alternative end treatments and caps to the vertical fin elements, including trellises.</p>	<p>"Vertical fin elements and trellises will have metal end cap treatment."</p>	<p>This recommendation has been addressed as described by the applicant.</p>
<p>2. Explore enhancements to the "tuck-under" parking at the motor court to reduce the "dingbat" appearance. In addition, explore creation of a two-story brick base aligned with the height of the brick facade of the Thatcher Medical Building, with a change in material at the Thatcher building eave line.</p>	<p>"Please see North elevation on page 40, view 8-11, page 77- 78."</p>	<p>The noted views on page 77-78 depict a combination of light tan stucco and brick and staff finds that the tan stucco portions continue to create the "dingbat" appearance that the Commission suggested be reduced. As noted previously for other reasons, staff has recommended a condition of approval requiring the tan stucco to be replaced with brick or painted a similar color to the brick. The northerly building volume incorporates the recommended brick base</p>

Concept Design Review Recommendations, November 12, 2019:	Architect Responses	Staff Comment:
		with the parapet being dark grey stucco.
3. Explore alternative locations for the bicycle storage to minimize potential conflicts with the adjacent motor court and vehicle movements.	"Class I bicycle parking is staying at the same location proposed in the Concept Design Submittal, at the breezeway. It is a convenient location for both residential and commercial tenants. Class II bicycle parking for commercial has been moved to the Western "tuck-under" parking, behind the wall to reduce potential conflict with the vehicular movement."	The new proposed location of Class II bicycle parking addresses the Commission's concern regarding potential vehicular conflicts.

Materials & Colors:

The buildings are proposed to be clad in a combination of panelized 1/2"-thick brick veneer by Best Panel Company ("Midwest Series Brick" line; running bond color mix of "Charcoal," "New Bedford," and "Colony" with rowlock courses in "Yorktown" color), grey hand-troweled stucco (La Habra "Bay Ridge" color), tan hand-troweled stucco (La Habra "Mountain" color) and dark grey hand-troweled stucco (La Habra "Tuxedo" color). Architectural details such as the projecting vertical fins, pergolas, balcony railings and cornices are proposed to be dark bronze metal. Window and doorframes are also proposed to be dark bronze metal-clad wood by Andersen. Manufacturer's specifications are provided on sheets 46, (brick veneer), 47 (pavers) 66 (windows and doors) and 74 (lighting fixtures).

Strategically located large-scale renderings with both vertical and horizontal wall sections are provided on sheets 48-60, with architectural details on sheets 61-63, and window/door schedules and diagrams on sheets 64-65. Staff has reviewed the materials and details provided and determined that they provide a sufficient level of detail at this stage of the design process. Based on these sections and details, the detailing of the building will be high-quality and consistent with the proposed architectural style of the project. In particular, with the exception of the north façade described previously, materials transitions are shown occurring at outside corners, which will give the buildings a sense of permanence and quality. Staff recommends conditions of approval requiring all window and door frames to be recessed at least 2" from the exterior wall, all details of brick window headers to clearly call out the use of soldier-course corner bricks and sills to clearly call out rowlock course corner bricks, provision of brick corner details demonstrating use of manufactured corner bricks at all corners, as well as painting of soffits to match the adjacent surface material as closely as possible. Finally, consistent with standard conditions of recent Final Design Review approvals, staff also recommends that a large-scale mock-up panel be provided for staff review during construction to ensure high-quality materials installation.

Mechanical Screening:

The roof plan on sheet 29 depicts placement of HVAC condensers on the roofs of the building, with a screening system of perforated metal panels. The Ground Level Plan on sheet 26

depicts the locations of an electrical vault at the southern end of the site, the Fire Department Connection (FDC) and backflow device at the northern end of the site next to the Thatcher Building drop-off driveway, gas meters in a room adjacent to the northerly pedestrian portal, the pump for the courtyard water feature at the northern end of the courtyard adjacent to the subterranean garage ramp and, an electrical meter room within the building interior lobby/club space. The landscape plans do not appear to include space for the utilities that are proposed within planter areas at the northern and southern end of the Catalina Avenue frontage. Therefore, staff has recommended a condition requiring the landscape plans be further coordinated with the site/ground floor plan to ensure that the utilities are depicted and the landscaping proposed is modified as required, in addition to ensuring that the utilities are adequately screened from public view. In addition, to ensure that this equipment is not relocated during construction, staff has recommended a condition of approval requiring written approval of the proposed locations (or specification of alternative location requirements) from the utilities prior to issuance of a building permit.

Although not depicted on the roof plan, the applicant has indicated that all mechanical venting will be routed to the roof. Staff has recommended a condition of approval requiring this design be illustrated in the drawings submitted for a building permit. All balconies are shown having open railings or a combination of open and solid railings and will, therefore, not require overflow drainage scuppers.

Landscaping:

Landscaping plans have been provided for the project, on sheets 80-87 at the back of the plan sets. The project proposes planting of a large number of new trees including 17 24" box Burgundy Willow trees along the south and west property lines, three 24" box Desert Willow Trees along the S. Catalina Avenue frontage along with three 24" box Chinese Fringe Flower trees and one 48" box Swan Hill Olive tree or California Pepper tree. The main garden is shown planted with four 36" box Chinese Pistache trees with three more within the north courtyard. Four 15-gallon Blue Bush trees are also proposed within this courtyard. The subterranean garage is shown set back approximately 6' from the east property line along S. Catalina Avenue and the west (rear) property line and 12' from the south property line; therefore, new trees planted in these setback areas will be installed in natural soil, which will allow them to grow more substantially than trees installed in planters. Extensive low- and moderate-water-use shrubs and groundcovers are shown within planters throughout the site. Staff has recommended a condition requiring compliance with the City's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance, which will be reviewed during plan check.

The architectural plans provide information about proposed hardscape materials on sheet 45, which includes three varieties of 24" x 24" porcelain pavers within the courtyard and three varieties of stamped concrete within the Thatcher Building drop-off and parking zone. The design of the planter walls is provided on sheet 62, which shows that they will be clad in both brick and stucco materials matching the building design. Sheet 62 also includes details of two proposed pergola structures in the main garden, one of which is proposed to be placed over a circular focal planter at the western end of the garden, visible from both the main garden and the north courtyard. An infinity-edge water feature is proposed within the north courtyard and staff has recommended a condition requiring provision of details of it for review during plan check. The proposed landscape and hardscape designs are consistent with the overall design

of the project, provide sufficient amenities for use by the project residents, and will ensure that the buildings are appropriately softened by landscape to blend with their surroundings.

Lighting:

Lighting plans for each floor as well as lighting elevations are provided on sheets 68-73, with manufacturer's specifications on sheet 74. All proposed fixtures are by Bega Lighting, are dark bronze in color and include; ceiling-mounted fixtures, square sconces pointed downward, pyramidal sconces pointed upward and circular landscape lights. The proposed fixtures are high quality, contemporary in design and consistent with the design of the buildings and the color of all proposed metalwork. Staff recommends inclusion of the standard condition regarding lighting temperature not rising above 3,000 Kelvin.

Signage:

Conceptual signage plans are provided on sheet 67 of the plan set. Three signs identifying the name of the project, "Thatcher Court," are proposed at the north and south ends of the site and attached to the easterly main garden pergola. A "Parking" sign is also shown attached to the proposed pergola over the subterranean parking ramp. Other, smaller-scale signs are proposed to identify the lobby, club house and bicycle parking areas. Since the Zoning Code requires design review for signs on all new development projects, staff recommends that this requirement be reinforced with a condition of approval requiring this to be completed prior to installation of the main project and parking signage.

Comments from Other Departments:

During Concept Design Review, the Departments of Transportation and Public Works, the Fire Department and the Cultural Affairs Division of the Planning & Community Development Department provided a series of recommended conditions, which were incorporated into that previous approval. To reinforce compliance with these conditions, staff recommends repeating this condition of Concept Design Review in this decision.

Staff also requested a review of the current proposed plans by the Current Planning Section, which determined that there is one development standard with which the project does not comply. For the southernmost portion of the project that is within the RM-48 Zoning District, within the required main garden, a canopy tree within a tree well extending to natural soil is required. Although the design includes the planting of several new trees within the main garden, they are all proposed to be planted in raised planters over the parking structure. The applicants have indicated that incorporating a tree well with natural soil would require a major redesign of the subterranean parking structure. In addition, as noted above, the parking structure is proposed to be set back from the street edge to allow the proposed new trees within the front yard to be planted in natural soil. A 48" box Swan Hill Olive Tree or California Pepper Tree is proposed to be planted within the front yard, immediately adjacent to the main garden.

Because the project includes the preservation of a historic building, the Thatcher Medical Building, the Design Commission may approve deviations from the Zoning Code requirements to ensure the preservation of the building. Due to the constraints imposed on the site as a result of the preservation of this building, as well as the proximity of the proposed canopy tree and tree

well to the main garden and, the fact the main garden design includes trees and shade structures that will ensure the usability of the space, staff recommends that the Commission approve the requested waiver to allow the project to be constructed without a tree well extending to natural soil in the main garden.

Environmental Determination:

During Concept Design Review, on November 12, 2019, the Design Commission adopted a Class 32 (“Infill Development Projects”) Exemption from CEQA and this application is consistent with that previous determination.

CONCLUSION:

Upon implementation of 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 and construction.

Respectfully submitted,



David M. Reyes
Director of Planning & Community Development
Department

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:



Kevin Johnson, Senior Planner



Leon E. White, Principal Planner

Attachments:

- A. Plans, elevations, details, materials and responses to Concept Design Review conditions
- B. Comments/conditions from other City Departments/Divisions