



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: DECEMBER 22, 2020

TO: DESIGN COMMISSION

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

SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR CONCEPT 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:

It is recommended that the Design Commission:

Environmental Determination

1. Find that the proposed project is consistent with the General Plan designation, with the General Plan goals and policies for the site, and with the applicable zoning designation and regulations; and that the project site has no value as habitat for endangered or threatened species, and can be served by utilities and public services;
2. Find that approval of the project will not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, water quality or cultural resources; and
3. Conclude, therefore, that the project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under Section 15332, (Class 32) "in-fill development projects" and that there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class; therefore, there are no unusual circumstances.

Findings for Compliance with the Tree Protection Ordinance

1. Acknowledge that a tree inventory for the project site shows that no protected trees are proposed to be removed as part of the proposed project.

Findings for the Approval of Height Limit Exception through Height Averaging

1. Find that the request for additional height for the rooftop trellis structures does not comply with all of the following findings for height averaging:
 - a. The additional height allows for preservation of vistas and view corridors, and/or a more sensitive transition to an adjacent historic structure, and/or provides for a more interesting skyline;
 - b. The additional height will not be injurious to adjacent properties or uses, or detrimental to environmental quality, quality of life, or the health, safety, and welfare of the public;
 - c. The additional height will promote a superior design solution that enhances the property and its surroundings, without detrimental impacts on views and sight lines; and
 - d. The additional height is consistent with the objectives and policies of the Central District Specific Plan and the General Plan.
3. Based on these findings, deny the request for height averaging.

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 Central District Specific Plan; and
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. Refine the articulation on all of the building elevations with appropriate detailing and architectural elements, consistent with the chosen architectural style. These details and elements may include, but are not limited to, arched openings, varying roof forms, deep wall recesses and/or projections, and exterior staircases.
2. All of the ground-level patios shall have a consistent design throughout the base of the building and shall be articulated as individual elements to each of the dwelling units with their own front steps and walkways that connect to the sidewalk to maintain a unified and harmonious appearance on the street-facing elevations and clearly define the base of the building.
3. The plans submitted for Final Design Review shall include product literature and enlarged detail drawings showing the in-plane transition of the cladding materials, the alignment and widths of control joints/reveals, and nuances in the material colors to ensure they exhibit a well-integrated design.
4. To ensure the building design appropriately conveys the chosen architectural style, depth and quality, alternative architectural detailing and elements shall be used in-lieu of the

applied precast concrete wall reliefs, lintel, and large spans of wall tile detailing. Examples include but are not limited to, punched stucco screens, decorative wrought iron bars in front of window openings, wooden corbels under balconies, and cornices.

5. The east (primary), south, and west elevations shall receive the same level of articulation and detailing as depicted on the north elevation in order to provide for consistent architectural design and detailing and to enhance the dimensionality of all sides of the building.
6. The plans submitted for Final Design Review shall also include exhibits with alternative design options that relocate the main entry to the northeast corner of the building, making it a prominent element.
7. The easterly staircase shall be relocated on the exterior of the primary elevation in order to enhance the connection between the main entrance and the street and to provide greater articulation on the primary façade. If this is not possible, the applicant shall submit exhibits showing the feasibility studies of building designs with an exterior staircase component that explain why such options were not feasible.
8. The balcony designs shall be modified to have decks consisting of wooden fasciae and corbel detailing, painted or stained in a dark brown color to more appropriately convey the chosen architectural theme.
9. The westerly stair tower volume shall be modified to minimize its solid appearance and provide a greater sense of openness that would lessen the visual height impacts on the adjacent residence.
10. Additional communal balconies shall be incorporated at the westerly edge of the upper floor levels or the northwest corner of the roof terrace shall be modified in order to create views overlooking the main courtyard. If these changes are not possible, the applicant shall submit exhibits with feasibility studies of building designs incorporating shared balconies or a terrace with views to the main garden from the westerly portion of the building and explain why such options were not feasible.
11. The plans submitted for Final Design Review shall clearly depict all of the proposed permanent amenities within the roof terrace, courtyard, and communal balconies.
12. The mailboxes shall be installed at the interior of the building to encourage resident traffic and interaction.
13. Submit revised landscape plans for Final Design Review, clearly indicating the locations of planting species, a legend, general dimensions of landscaped and hardscape areas, and photographs of the proposed landscape species.
14. The applicant shall include an illustrated written response to each condition of approval associated with Concept Design Review. Brief written responses without accompanying diagrams are not acceptable.
15. 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.

16. The project shall comply with the conditions provided by the Departments of Public Works (dated June 26, 2020) and Transportation (dated April 17, 2020), included in this report as Attachments B and C, 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.

BACKGROUND:

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:

Design Commission Comments from Preliminary Consultation

On November 13, 2018, the Design Commission reviewed an application for Preliminary Consultation for this project. The Commission’s comments from that meeting, with excerpts from the design team’s responses, and staff’s comments, are detailed in the chart below. The design team’s full responses are incorporated into the set of plans in Attachment A.

Commissioner Comments, November 13, 2018	Excerpt from Design Team Response	Staff Comments
<p>1. Emphasize the contemporary style of the building. Address high-quality examples of contemporary architecture in Pasadena (e.g., Doheny Eye Institute at 625 S Fair Oaks Ave.) to expand the vocabulary of relevant elements. Consider allowing asymmetric composition and utilizing the benefits of height averaging. At the same time, avoid bold architectural gestures and boxy frames to provide</p>	<p>“In consideration of the Mediterranean context surrounding the proposed site, we have redesigned the building to conform with the Spanish Colonial Revival style...”</p> <p>“...The use of bold substantial balconies with solid and void forms are inspired by the existing multi-family building complex across the site on Mira Monte Pl. SEE AA-003 for various perspective views of the proposed building.”</p>	<p>The overall scale, height, and chosen architectural style of the revised building is compatible with the existing developments within the surrounding area, which consist of one-to-four-story buildings occupying a major portion of the lots that they are built on. However, the massing and articulation of the proposed building has more of a contemporary aesthetic with slight references to the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The facades are modulated with large full-height volumes at the corners of the building that are predominantly flat and solid in appearance, with punched openings which are more commonly found in contemporary styles.</p> <p>However, in order to more successfully reference to the Spanish Colonial Revival style to be more compatible with the architectural character of the surrounding context, the full-height building elements should be visually broken into smaller components that relate to the human scale. The building design should incorporate a combination of elements such as flat, gable, and/or low-pitched hip roof forms;</p>

Commissioner Comments, November 13, 2018	Excerpt from Design Team Response	Staff Comments
contextual consistency with the neighborhood.		<p>shed/porch covers at entryways; arched window/doors and other openings, arcades, loggias, and/or an interior courtyard. Other features to be considered include projecting bay windows with shed covers, deeply recessed openings, corbels, and other elements that enhance wall plane variation and result in more dynamic facades with greater articulation.</p> <p>Therefore, staff recommends a condition of approval to further articulate all of the building elevations with period appropriate features, which may include but are not limited to, varying roof forms, arched openings, deep wall recesses and/or projections, exterior staircases.</p> <p>Upon implementation of the recommended condition of approval, the comment from Preliminary Consultation will be satisfactorily resolved.</p>
2. Restudy how units are expressed on the exterior elevation. Reflect interior partitions with the façade rhythm.	<p>“With use of a Mediterranean design, the units are more easily distinguished with the massing composition of the building. Window and door placements help define locations / functions of rooms and units within the building. Stair locations / towers are also well defined, creating a clear separation between units. Main public entries to the building at the stair towers are accentuated with the use of articulated shapes, moldings and tile inlays distinguishing the importance of the entry points among the otherwise simple massing elements of the project. SEE AA-003 (perspective</p>	<p>The project design has been revised to incorporate a combination of projecting and recessed private balconies that easily distinguish the individual units and create a sense of rhythm on the upper floor levels across the facades. The ground-level floor plan was also reconfigured so that all of the street-facing dwelling units have private patios and secondary entrance doors that are accessible from the sidewalk, which help distinguish individual units. However, several patio areas appear to be paired, with shared overhangs, front steps and walkways leading from the sidewalk and defeat the purpose of the applicable design guidelines that encourage the expression of individual units and front entrances with strong connections to the sidewalk level. In addition, the excessive stucco reveal detailing of the patio covers on the north elevation is inappropriate for the chosen architectural style and should be further explored.</p> <p>Staff recommends a condition of approval that all of the ground-level patios to be designed as individual elements to each of the dwelling units and have their own front steps and walkways that connect to the sidewalk in order to clearly express and distinguish individual units across the building frontages. Staff recommends another condition of approval to modify the patio</p>

Commissioner Comments, November 13, 2018	Excerpt from Design Team Response	Staff Comments
	views) / AA-300-301 (building exterior elevations).”	<p>cover designs with traditional Spanish Revival styles and incorporate a consistent design to maintain a unified and harmonious appearance throughout all of the elevations and clearly define the base of the building.</p> <p>Upon implementation of the conditions of approval, the comment from Preliminary Consultation will be satisfactorily resolved.</p>
<p>3. The surrounding context provides a consistent Mediterranean palette of very light and warm colors, including white, crème, beige, and tan, with red brick trim and terracotta clay tiles. Consider avoiding very dark contrasting “cold” colors (i.e., dark gray) for the proposed building to improve compatibility with the surrounding context. Expand use of “warm” inviting materials, like wood cladding, on insets and openings.</p>	<p>“The proposed project has been redesigned in a Mediterranean style consistent with Spanish Colonial Revival features with the surrounding context in mind. The main color palette has a field stucco color of white, with some tan accents and trim. Darker brown tone colors have been introduced to provide contrast and depth to certain elements around windows doors and balconies. Also introduced are black wrought iron rail work throughout as is typical in Spanish Colonial style. A natural stone veneer has been added on the ground level to establish and anchor the base of the building at patios, entryways, and circulation paths. Similar Spanish style red clay roof tiles have also been included at the tops of the stairs, which look onto usable roof terraces. SEE AA-003.”</p>	<p>The preliminary material and color palette is compatible with the surrounding context, consisting of primarily white and natural/earth tone colors with an accent dark tone on a limited number of architectural features. Specifically, the main building walls are proposed to be painted white. Dark accent grey tones are proposed in small wall areas between window bays, on window sills, and on roof rafters. The towers on the east and west elevations will be painted with a light grey/beige accent color to articulate the facades.</p> <p>The elevations specify stone veneer at the base of the building, sand-finish stucco articulated with reveals on the wall areas above. Other materials incorporated to the building design include wrought iron hand railings and downspouts, fiberglass patio door systems, and Spanish tile roofing on the tower elements and the shed cover centered within the south elevation of the building. Decorative wall reliefs will be made of precast concrete veneer and decorative tiles.</p> <p>As depicted on the elevations, it is unclear which walls would be covered with stone or precast concrete veneer, the stucco control joints (reveals) are not clearly visible, and window materials are not specified.</p> <p>Since the details related to cladding materials are addressed at Final Design Review, staff recommends a condition of approval requiring product literature and enlarged detail drawings showing the in-plane transition of the cladding materials, the alignment and widths of control joints/reveals, and nuances in the material colors to ensure they exhibit a well-integrated design.</p>

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		<p>Further, to ensure the building design appropriately conveys the chosen architectural style, staff recommends a condition of approval to explore alternative architectural detailing more appropriate for the traditional Spanish Revival style in-lieu of precast concrete wall reliefs, lintel, and large spans of wall tile detailing. Examples include but are not limited to, punched stucco screens, decorative wrought iron bars in front of window openings, wooden corbels under balconies, and cornices.</p> <p>Upon implementation of the conditions of approval, the comment from Preliminary Consultation will be satisfactorily resolved.</p>
<p>4. Emphasize the northeast corner of the lot with architectural elements such as an articulated façade, entrance off the corner, balconies or other treatment. Consider adding design elements to the street facing first-floor elevation at the corner that will enhance the pedestrian interface and add additional visual interest. Consider recessing doors and windows, articulating the building façade and façade details, and adding design features that are “human-scaled” and inviting to pedestrians.</p>	<p>“A bold corner with grouped and recessed windows anchors the northeast corner of the building. The main entry off the east is accompanied by a ramp with stone clad walls leading up to the main entry. The stone veneer provided at the base of the building around low walls and patios fortifies the human scale and slowly allows to transition into the taller structure beyond. Low canopies and balcony projections help keep the lower levels of the building more substantial. Subtle landscaping treatments, like Spanish floor tile patterns within the circulation paths as well as a cantilevered shelf bracket for decorative pottery. Landscaping will be provided to articulate and enhance the human scale around</p>	<p>The revised plans do not clearly demonstrate how the northeast corner of the building is a prominent element to the overall design and how it engages the street intersection or pedestrian scale. A major portion of the building articulation and detailing is focused on the secondary (north) elevation and it appears that the main access to the site is located on this elevation.</p> <p>The primary building entrance fronting Oak Knoll Avenue is recessed from the façade and lacks prominence. Staff believes there are opportunities to articulate the corner volume by clearly defining its base through differentiation of exterior materials and detailing. In addition, relocating the main entry to the northeast corner of the building would make it a prominent element that better engages the street and enhances its connection to the sidewalk.</p> <p>Staff recommends a condition of approval to explore relocating the main entry to the northeast corner of the building and making it a prominent element. Staff recommends another condition of approval requiring the east (primary), south, and west elevations to receive the same level of articulation and detailing as depicted on the north elevation in order to enhance the facades dimensionality.</p> <p>Upon implementation of the condition of approval, the comment from Preliminary Consultation will be satisfactorily resolved.</p>

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	the perimeter of the building. SEE AA-003”	
<p>5. Address the Current Planning comments regarding the orientation of building entrances. Restudy the project to ensure that first-floor units facing South Oak Knoll Avenue and Mira Monte Place have direct entries from the street to better engage the public realm. The entrances should have stoops, canopies or covered entryways. Provide a minor grade separation between the first floor and sidewalk.</p>	<p>“Units have been configured to provide direct entry access to units facing the streets. Each unit fronting a street has a private porch with balcony projections above to provide covered entryways. A grade separation has been established to take into consideration the change in elevation at the ends of the site, resulting in a series of steps to access the private patios upon entry. SEE AA-101”</p>	<p>As outlined in the response to comment no.2 above, significant changes have been made to improve the orientation of ground-level dwelling units to effectively engage the public realm.</p> <p>Upon implementation of the recommended condition of approval noted above, the comment from Preliminary Consultation will be satisfactorily resolved.</p>
<p>6. Restudy the location of the elevator. Consider the possibility of moving the elevator towards the center of the building and bringing open staircase forward to the front elevation to reinforce pedestrian interaction. If the elevator is to stay at the front elevation, consider adding a half-stop at the grade level to provide accessibility options instead of the ramp.</p>	<p>“The building has been reconfigured. The elevator has been moved closer to the center of the building. The parking configuration for the basement levels below are governing the location of the elevator relative to the parking spaces and drive aisles. The elevator now being in a more central location has no relation to the elevations as seen from the exterior of the building. SEE AA-100, AA-100.P1, AA-100.P2”</p>	<p>The elevator has been relocated to a more central location, which improves the configuration of dwelling units. However, the configuration and treatment of the secondary front staircase could be revised to better engage with the sidewalk and create a more interesting façade appearance.</p> <p>Therefore, staff recommends a condition of approval to explore opportunities in locating the easterly staircase on the exterior of the primary elevation to enhance the connection between the main entrance and the street and to provide greater articulation on the primary façade.</p> <p>Upon implementation of the condition of approval, the comment from Preliminary Consultation will be satisfactorily resolved.</p>
<p>7. Consider redesigning glass balcony railings to</p>	<p>“Proposed railings on balconies are no longer utilizing the use</p>	<p>The previously proposed architectural style has been completely revised and the comment from</p>

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<p>provide them with a sense of materiality and safety. Options include, but are not limited to, using a combination of glass and metal railing, or wood texture composite siding, or frosted glass. Provide several options for the Concept Design Review.</p>	<p>of glass. We have proposed black iron railings with use of vertical pickets. Heavier decorative posts are introduced between rails to accentuate the Spanish Colonial Revival. SEE AA-003.”</p>	<p>preliminary consultation is not entirely applicable to the currently chosen architectural style.</p> <p>The revised plans illustrate balconies designed with flat decks with stucco-clad fasciae and decorative wrought iron handrails that are proposed to be painted black. However, this design still exhibits a strong contemporary aesthetic rather than the stated intent to reflect the traditional Spanish Revival style.</p> <p>Therefore, staff recommends a condition of approval to modify the balcony decks with wooden fasciae and corbels painted or stained in a dark brown color to more appropriately convey the chosen architectural theme.</p> <p>Upon implementation of the condition of approval, the comment from Preliminary Consultation will be satisfactorily resolved.</p>
<p>8. Explore ways to reduce the height and massing of the building at the rear where it is adjacent to a single-family residence that may or may not change in the future. Consider using set-backs of upper floors, stepped terraces, changes in plane, and articulated rooflines to create a more gradual transition to the lower-scaled building. Treat the west elevation with the same level of attention and detail as the street-facing elevations as it is highly visible from the public right-of-way.</p>	<p>“The required 20'x20' courtyard has been moved to the northwest corner of the site to address the lower scale of the single-family home on the west side of the lot. Maintaining this gap between the lots with the courtyard will keep distance between the higher and lower structures. Landscaping, seat walls and trees will be used to accentuate a gradual slope between the structures to create a more subtle transition in scale. Balcony projections at each level have also been provided on the west elevation to break up the tall plane and verticality of the proposed structure. Additionally, the courtyard includes a</p>	<p>The applicant has revised the massing and site design of the project to more appropriately respond to the adjoining single-family residence west of the site. However, the stair tower design on the westerly elevation should also be modified to further reduce the visual impact of the difference in height between the project and the structure on the adjacent site.</p> <p>Staff recommends a condition of approval to revise the design to reduce the appearance of solidity of the stair tower volume and provide a greater sense of openness.</p> <p>Upon implementation of the condition of approval, the comment from Preliminary Consultation will be satisfactorily resolved.</p>

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	<p>large central canopy tree as well as additional eye level planting with usable bench seating and the introduction of decorative wall fountains, arched portals with vines leading to additional gathering and circulation spaces expressing the feel of a courtyard within a courtyard as is typical for Mediterranean style courts. Many elements have been incorporated to create visual connections to other spaces as they are approached with use of mosaic wall tile inlays, fountains and sculptural elements. SEE AA-003 / AA-101 / AA-302”</p>	
<p>9. Restudy the location of the open courtyard. Verify that the adjacent building to the south does not block light to the courtyard at the proposed location. Consider moving the courtyard closer to the west edge of the site to mitigate the transition to the one-story single-family house.</p>	<p>Same comment as noted above.</p>	<p>The preliminary site design consisted of a ground-level courtyard configuration that provided direct views from the majority of individual units at all of the floor levels, it was partially visible from the street level, and was clearly a central element to the building, similar to traditional Spanish Revival styles.</p> <p>The proposed relocation of the courtyard to the westerly edge of the project site more effectively mitigates the difference in scale and height between the adjoining residence and the proposed development. The courtyard will be more prominent and highly visible from the public right of way, and will have greater exposure to the sky and receive more lighting throughout the day to sustain the landscaping.</p> <p>The comment from Preliminary Consultation has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>10. Study additional means to articulate the interior</p>	<p>Same comment as noted above.</p>	<p>As noted previously in the response to comment no.9 above, the applicant has revised the overall courtyard design and location to respond</p>

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<p>courtyard-facing elevations to provide for more engagement, depth and articulation. Explore ways to improve connections and views between a majority of the residential units and the courtyard.</p>		<p>sensitively to the surrounding context. The revisions to the courtyard design soften the visual impact of the new building's scale and height and allow it to receive additional natural light throughout the day.</p> <p>However, the direct visual connection between the courtyard and the individual units will be limited to those located on the westerly edge of the building. Therefore, staff recommends a condition of approval to explore opportunities in providing additional communal balconies at the westerly edge of the upper floor levels or to modify the northwest corner of the roof terrace in order to create views overlooking the courtyard.</p> <p>Upon implementation of the condition of approval, the comment from Preliminary Consultation will be satisfactorily resolved.</p>
<p>11. Ensure that the communal open spaces for the project include amenities that will allow for their active use by the residents of the project, such as mailboxes, benches, outdoor cooking facilities, or a playground area.</p>	<p>“Communal outdoor spaces have been provided and will include amenities for active use by residents as follows: The east building entry provides an area for mailboxes and collection. The courtyard will have seat walls and gathering spaces. There is a generous rooftop terrace, which is divided into several outdoor areas to serve different functions. Sundecks will be provided with lounge chairs and patio tables for gathering, BBQ areas and seating as well as areas for exercise equipment. SEE AA-101 / AA-105”</p>	<p>The revised building design includes a large rooftop communal space proposed to be divided into four sections, one which will have freestanding trellis. A ground-level courtyard at the northwest corner of the site will create a buffer zone to minimize the vertical impact of the development on the existing one-story residence on the adjacent site. The second and third-floor levels of the building also consist of communal balconies adjoining the shared elevator, which may create opportunities for residents to interact. However, the plans do not clearly specify where permanent amenities (i.e. outdoor cooking facilities, exercise equipment, lounge chairs, etc.) are proposed to be located within the communal spaces. Typically, more detailed information regarding the programming and amenities is provided at Final Design Review, and staff recommends a condition of approval requiring that plans submitted for Final Design Review shall clearly depict all of the proposed permanent amenities within the four zones of the roof terrace, courtyard, and communal balconies.</p> <p>Staff also recommends a condition of approval to incorporate seating, planters, and/or other permanent amenities within the communal balcony areas on the south edge of the building; and to locate the mailboxes at the interior of the</p>

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		<p>building to encourage resident traffic and interaction.</p> <p>Upon implementation of the recommended conditions of approval noted in the comment above, the comment from Preliminary Consultation will be satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>12. The submitted Tree Inventory does not identify any trees at the property. The photographs show a number of trees on the edges of the site and on both frontages. Provide an accurate Tree Inventory and explain which trees are proposed to remain and to be removed. Work closely with the Department of Public Works to ensure that street trees are not adversely impacted by the project, at both the root and canopy zones.</p>	<p>“Please see the tree inventory provided by the Arborist on sheet _AA_G-6”</p>	<p>A tree inventory was submitted for review and staff has determined that there are no protected trees on the site and that the project does not propose to remove any street trees. In addition, conditions of approval from the Department of Public Works will require the applicant to submit a tree protection plan to ensure that street trees are not adversely impacted by the project.</p> <p>The comment from Preliminary Consultation has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>13. Review Pasadena’s new Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELo) which imposes new requirements for projects with 500 sq. ft. and more of new landscaping, to check if you have to undergo a review for the landscaping component of the project.</p>	<p>“Preliminary landscaping plans have been provided as part of this set. See L series landscape plans attached at the end of the drawing package.”</p>	<p>Compliance with the MWELo requirements will be verified by the applicable department during plan check.</p> <p>The comment from Preliminary Consultation has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>

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<p>14. Review the Climate Action Plan Consistency Checklist (see Attachment A) and, in your application for Concept Design Review, demonstrate consistency with Pasadena’s Climate Action Plan. As proposed, consistency with the Climate Action Plan will be reviewed as part of the Affordable Housing Concession by the Hearing Officer, after which the Design Commission will adopt it as a part of the CEQA clearance. However, if the applicant decides not to apply for the Affordable Housing Concession, then the Design Commission will review for consistency with the Climate Action Plan.</p>	<p>“Please see attached completed checklist Sheet_AA_G-6”</p>	<p>A complete CAP Checklist was submitted for review and demonstrates compliance with the CAP. To ensure that these project features are retained throughout the design process, staff recommends a condition of approval to require that 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>Upon implementation of the condition of approval, the comment from Preliminary Consultation will be satisfactorily resolved.</p>
<p>15. The Public Art Curator should be consulted as early as possible in the review process to ensure compliance with the public art requirement and integration of public art into the design.</p>	<p>“We will contact the Public Art Curator for the public art requirement and coordinate allowable options for the project”</p>	<p>The Cultural Affairs Division determined that the project is not subject to the public art requirement because it is located outside of the Downtown/Old Pasadena/ Northwest Program Areas.</p> <p>The comment from Preliminary Consultation has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>

Programming and Circulation

The proposed four-story project consists of a roughly rectangular-shaped building mass occupying the majority of the site. The building would be situated above two levels of subterranean parking. A two-way driveway is proposed to accommodate vehicular access/egress from Oak Knoll Avenue, at the southeast corner of the property. The project proposes a primary courtyard at the northwest corner of the site, fronting Mira Monte Place. The building's primary facade faces South Oak Knoll Avenue. The ground floor of this building has a total of five residential units and its primary elevation consists of two residential units facing the street, additional residential units above, and the main entrance door is recessed between the ground-level units. As described in the table above, staff recommends conditions of approval to explore relocating the main entry to the northeast corner of the building or locating the easterly staircase on the exterior of the primary elevation to better engage the street and enhance its connection with the pedestrian scale; and to provide greater articulation on the façade.

The secondary façade faces north, toward Mira Monte Place. This elevation is programmed with three residential units having direct access to the street, additional residential units at the floor levels above, and a primary courtyard adjoins the westerly edge of the building. Another recommended condition of approval noted above would require modifications to the ground-level patios to clearly define unit entries and boundaries of all residential units fronting the sidewalk. Pedestrian access to the interior of the site would be available from Oak Knoll Avenue and from the main garden. Within the site, the units are accessed directly from the parking garage and double loaded corridors via a centrally located elevator and stairwells at front and rear ends of the building that connect to upper floor levels. The second through fourth levels consist of identical floor plans. Each level is configured with four residential units: a double-loaded corridor spanning east to west through middle of the building and two units on each side. The roof plan illustrates a communal roof terrace with multiple zones with a variety of permanent amenities. The programming and circulation are appropriate and contextually compatible. However, staff recommends a condition of approval requiring further specifications of the type of permanent amenities that will be provided on the roof terrace, main courtyard, and other common spaces.

Orientation

The proposed development is sited on a corner lot with each of the building elevations appropriately oriented east and north, toward their respective street frontages facing South Oak Knoll Avenue and Mira Monte Place. Each street facing elevation contains openings and the primary building elevation includes a large number of balcony windows throughout the upper floor levels. However, noted in the table above, staff recommends a condition of approval that the ground level units on the primary elevation should receive the same level of architectural detailing and treatment as the residential units on the street-facing north elevation. The north elevation facing Mira Monte Place has unit entries that directly engage with the public realm, windows and a significant pedestrian entryway that provides for visibility into the interior courtyard. The overall orientation of the project is appropriate, with the more significant architectural features and pedestrian access engaging with the adjacent streets.

Height, Massing and Modulation

The overall building mass is composed of a four-story, rectangular volume approximately 50 feet tall. The building design consists of a flat roof with minimal height variation and two stair tower elements located at the front and rear ends of the building, which extend approximately 5 feet above the roofline. The west elevation responds sensitively to the surrounding context by recessing the northeast corner volume to further separate the building from the westerly boundary and accommodate a main courtyard that would enhance the transition and minimize the visual height impact on the adjacent single-story residence west of the site. As noted in the table above, staff recommends a condition of approval to modify the westerly stair tower by reducing its solid appearance to minimize its visual height impact on the adjoining site.

The elevation drawings depict the building mass being modulated by the creation of projecting and recessed balconies, minimal wall plane variation, the stair towers, and punched openings on the façades. Specifically, the primary (easterly) elevation is composed of a predominantly flat façade with a narrow, slightly recessed stair tower that divides the facade into two four-story-tall wall planes. The southerly wall plane is modulated with projecting balconies and punched openings, however, the northerly side is significantly solid and flat with disproportionate punched openings. The secondary (north) elevation is symmetrically composed and the most articulated in comparison to the others. This façade is modulated with four-story tall projecting/recessed walls with punched openings, patio covers along the base, and projecting balconies on the upper levels. The west (rear) elevation is modulated by three four-story tall volumes that are stepped back from the westerly boundary. The volume at the southerly edge of the elevation is the closest to the west property line, the middle volume is a slightly recessed stair tower with a hipped roof, and the third volume is recessed from the stair tower. However, the elevation has a stark appearance due to the large spans of flat, solid walls, disproportioned punched openings and small projecting balconies. The south elevation depicts recessed balconies located in the middle of the façade with a shed cover on the uppermost bay and two full-height flat wall planes bookend the two columns of balcony bays.

As noted in the table above, staff recommends several conditions of approval to refine the modulation and articulation on all sides of the building by breaking up the large spans of flat wall areas into smaller components, incorporating patio covers consistently on the east and north sides of the building to clearly define its base, more substantial roof height and form variation, and incorporating additional wall plane variation to enhance the dimensionality of facades and achieve a harmonious comprehensive design. Staff believes that with implementation of the recommended conditions of approval the height, massing and modulation will be contextually appropriate and responsive to the applicable design guidelines and comments from the Commission.

Request for Height Averaging

The project proposes to utilize height averaging to allow the rooftop trellis structures, which are not considered appurtenant structures and, as such, are counted toward the overall maximum allowed height. The provisions of height averaging in PMC Section 17.30.050.B.2 provide that additional building height is permitted over no more than 30 percent of the building footprint on a development parcel, provided that the average height over the entire footprint does not exceed the otherwise required maximum building height. The Design Commission is the review

authority for requests for Height Averaging, and the following findings must be made in order to grant a request.

- a) The additional height allows for preservation of vistas and view corridors, and/or a more sensitive transition to an adjacent historic structure, and/or provides for a more interesting skyline;

The additional proposed height is associated with rooftop trellis structures that are not well integrated into the design and are not consistent with the chosen Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style, and therefore do not provide for a more interesting or aesthetically pleasing skyline.

- b) The additional height will not be injurious to adjacent properties or uses, or detrimental to environmental quality, quality of life, or the health, safety, and welfare of the public;

The additional height will not be detrimental to adjacent properties.

- c) The additional height will promote a superior design solution that enhances the property and its surroundings, without detrimental impacts on views and sight lines; and

Although the additional height will not detrimentally impact views or sight lines; the additional height of the trellis structures are not well integrated in to the project design or the chosen Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style and do not promote a superior design.

- d) The additional height is consistent with the objectives and policies of the Central District Specific Plan and the General Plan.

The proposed rooftop trellis structures are not well integrated into the project design nor do they relate to the chosen Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style. An inappropriately resolved architectural style is inconsistent with the objectives and policies of the Specific Plan and General Plan.

Because not all of the required findings can be made, staff does not recommend that the Design Commission approve the request for height averaging.

Architectural Style and Detailing

The stated architectural style for this project is Spanish Colonial Revival, however, the building design does not exhibit a full array of period-appropriate architectural details and further refinement is needed in order to consistently and appropriately reinforce the traditional Spanish Revival style. As noted in the table above, in order to achieve a traditional Spanish Colonial Revival aesthetic that is compatible with the surrounding architectural context, the full-height building elements should be visually broken into smaller components that relate to the human scale and the design should incorporate a full array of architectural elements consistent with the architectural reference. Therefore, staff recommends a condition of approval to further articulate all of the building elevations with period appropriate features.

The elevations specify exterior materials that include stone veneer, sand-finish stucco with reveals, wrought iron hand railings and downspouts. In addition, fiberglass patio door systems, Spanish tile roofing, and a decorative lintel and wall reliefs constructed with precast concrete and decorative tiles. These details are generally consistent with the chosen architectural reference. However, to ensure the building design appropriately conveys the chosen architectural style, staff recommends a condition of approval that the detailing be further refined and that alternative architectural detailing in-lieu of the precast concrete wall reliefs, oversized lintel, the large spans of wall tile detailing, and the heavy patio cover surrounds be incorporated into the plans submitted for Final Design Review. Alternative solutions may also include, but are not limited to, punched stucco screens, decorative wrought iron bars in front of window openings, wooden corbels under balconies, and cornices. Upon implementation of the recommended conditions of approval, the architectural detailing of the building will better reflect the chosen architectural style.

Compatibility

With the exception of a single-story residence adjoining the project site, which is ineligible for designation, the proposed new building is compatible with its immediate surroundings in terms of height, setbacks and architectural design. The proposed development is significantly taller and larger in scale than the existing one-story residential property to the west of the project site. However, through careful modulation of the height, setbacks, and architectural treatment the design responds sensitively to adjacent residence. The main courtyard is located along the westerly edge of the site to create a greater separation from the existing house, and the residential units at the northwest corner of the building are significantly recessed from the westerly façade to preserve the natural lighting and privacy of the adjacent residence. As noted in the table above, staff recommends a condition of approval to modify the westerly stair tower by reducing the solidity of the building volume to provide a greater sense of openness and minimize its height impacts on the adjoining residence. As conditioned, the project design will be compatible with the surrounding context.

Conceptual Landscape Design

The conceptual landscape plans depict landscaping along the front and corner side yard setback areas, at the main courtyard located on the westerly edge of the site, and along the south edge of the driveway ramp. Additional landscaping is also proposed in planter boxes that would be distributed throughout the roof terrace. The plans also depict a total of 33 trees for the entire site: 11 trees would be planted on the ground level and 22 of them would be planted on the roof terrace. The conceptual landscape design is appropriate, however, as noted above in the response to Preliminary Consultation comments, staff recommends several conditions of approval to ensure that the plans submitted for Final Design review show that the main courtyard and communal spaces are appropriately landscaped and usable by the residents.

COMMENTS FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS:

Staff routed the project for comment to several City Departments including the Public Works, Transportation, Fire, and Housing Departments, as well as the Building, Current Planning and Cultural Affairs Divisions of the Planning & Community Development Department. The Building and Current Planning Divisions and Fire Department provided standard comments related to

Building and Fire Code compliance, and the Cultural Affairs Division confirmed the project is exempt from the Public Art requirements. The recommended conditions from the Housing Department, Department of Public Works and Department of Transportation are included as Attachments B, C, and D, respectively.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

Staff engaged Michael Baker International, an environmental consulting firm, to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the project and determine whether it would meet the required findings for a Categorical Exemption under the CEQA Class 32, “infill development projects” exemption. A project may qualify for a Class 32 Categorical Exemption if the following are applicable: (a) the project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations; (b) the proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses; (c) the project site has no value, as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species; (d) approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality; (e) the site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services. Based on the technical studies prepared by Michael Baker International (Attachments E and F), the project would not have the potential to result in significant impacts related to air quality, traffic, noise, water quality or cultural resources. The project is also proposed on a previously disturbed site less than five acres in size in an urbanized area and is consistent the General Plan land use designation and zoning designation. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission determine that the project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332.

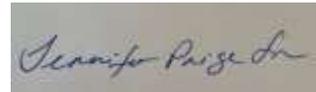
The project is also subject to the City of Pasadena’s Climate Action Plan, which is a qualified greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction plan developed in accordance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15183.5. The project is required to demonstrate that the anticipated Green House Gas (GHG) emissions generated by this project will be below the accepted thresholds established for the City. The City has developed a tool, the Climate Action Plan Consistency Checklist, which applicants can use to demonstrate consistency with Pasadena’s Climate Action Plan (CAP). Projects that meet the requirements of this Checklist will be deemed consistent with Pasadena’s CAP and will be found to have a less than significant contribution to cumulative GHG (i.e., the project’s incremental contribution to cumulative GHG effects is not cumulatively considerable), pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15064(h)(3), 15130(d), and 15183(b). Projects that do not meet the requirements in this Checklist will be deemed inconsistent with Pasadena’s CAP and must prepare a project-specific analysis of GHG emissions, including quantification of existing and projected GHG emissions and incorporation of the measures in this Checklist to the extent feasible.

The CAP Checklist provides three options for applicants to use to demonstrate compliance. The applicant has selected Option A, Sustainable Development Actions. The applicant has indicated, on the provided plans, specific features or actions that will be incorporated into the project that demonstrate that the project contributes its fair share to the City’s cumulative GHG reduction goals and the project is therefore deemed consistent with the CAP. To ensure that the project continues to incorporate these features, staff recommends a condition of approval requiring that the features be clearly incorporated into and shown on the plans submitted for Final Design Review.

CONCLUSION:

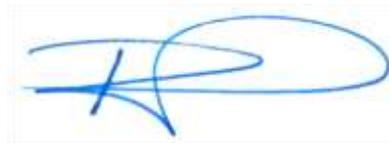
As conditioned, the project design will satisfactorily address all of the comments provided during Preliminary Consultation, will be consistent with the applicable guidelines and meet the required findings for approval of Concept Design Review. Staff recommends approval of the application for Concept Design Review with conditions to refine the massing and improve the quality and detailing of the architectural design.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Reviewed by:



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Attachments:

- A. Applicant Submittal, Including Preliminary Consultation Responses, Current Plans & Elevations
- B. Recommended conditions from the Housing Department
- C. Recommended conditions from the Department of Public Works
- D. Recommended conditions from the Department of Transportation
- E. Air Quality Technical Report (Electronic Attachment available at <https://ww5.cityofpasadena.net/commissions/design-commission/>)
- F. Noise Technical Report (Electronic Attachment available at <https://ww5.cityofpasadena.net/commissions/design-commission/>)
- G. CAP Consistency Checklist