



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
PLANNING DIVISION

December 17, 2018

Katie Vila
Development Director
3112 Los Feliz Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90039

NOTICE OF DESIGN COMMISSION COMMENTS

Application for Preliminary Consultation

1307 Lincoln Avenue

Case #: PLN2018-00502

Council District 1

Dear Ms. Villa

On December 11, 2018, at a public meeting at the Pasadena City Council Chambers, the Design Commission, acting under the provisions of Section 17.61.030 of the Pasadena Municipal Code, reviewed your application for Preliminary Consultation of a proposed Planned Development for 60 townhomes with surface parking. The design guidelines applied to this review were the design-related goals and policies in the Land Use Element of the General Plan, the Lincoln Avenue Specific Plan, and the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-family Residential Districts. The Commission generally agreed with the comments in the staff report, which are reiterated below, and provided additional comments on the preliminary design, also listed below:

1. Study ways to orient the entries of the units lining the site edges toward the streets (Washington Boulevard and Pepper Street) to develop a more engaged street edge. The unit entry locations and relationship to the overall site design should be further studied to ensure all units, particularly those along the site edges facing the street, have meaningful connection to the public realm. The generous use of architectural elements such as covered porches, stoops, terraces etc. is encouraged.
2. Study ways to eliminate the narrow walkways between the proposed building volumes, specifically, the building volumes facing the Lincoln Avenue courtyards, as these narrow corridors are uninviting and contribute to an environment that is not pedestrian friendly. Consider consolidating some of the building masses, varying the building heights and creating "L" shaped building volumes around the Lincoln Avenue facing courtyards to create a larger central walkway between the two "L" shaped volumes. Consider combined or shared entryways for the consolidated building volumes.
3. Consider consolidating the massing of the three wedge shaped freestanding units with other building volumes on the project site, possibly those at the westernmost edge. The three wedge shaped building volumes do not appear to have a strong connection or relationship to the rest of the site and as a result appear as awkward building volumes

that are not integrated with the project site or the surrounding context. Their location and massing should be further resolved.

4. It is critical that this project incorporate a full array of details features inspired by the works of Irving Gill. The architectural style is currently monotonous and should be revised to incorporate a more significant amount of notable architectural features and details inspired by the works of Irving Gill (including window typology and patterns, detailing, the use of arches, etc...). These features should not be merely applied, but significantly incorporated into the project design to effectively develop variety and lessen the monotonous and stark appearance of the design.
5. The corners are opportunities to provide or develop unifying features that create a clearer identity for the project and enhanced architectural treatments for these units is necessary. Revise the design and appearance of the corner units/building volumes to engage the public realm and identify the project. As proposed, the interface of the corner units with the surrounding contexts is currently still awkward and unresolved.
6. The project site design has improved from the first submittal, but still appears to be primarily oriented around vehicular circulation at the expense of the pedestrian experience. Further study the overall site design and internal vehicular circulation and consider additional means to create a safer shared pedestrian environment and build a stronger connection between the eastern and western halves of the project site, such as consolidating some of the building masses, further modulating the building heights, and introducing enhanced paving across the north/south vehicular circulation paths and enhanced landscaping.
7. The strict grid pattern for vehicular access and the straight through configuration of the fire access appear forced. Consider angling the driveways to respond to the Washington Boulevard and Pepper Street orientations. In addition, the dead end of driveways at Lincoln Avenue creates a vehicular oriented environment and detracts from the pedestrian environment of the adjacent sidewalk. Revise the design or incorporate a more substantial buffer or setback to preserve the pedestrian environment.
8. Study how the setbacks of the building volumes along the street, particularly those west of the center drive aisle/fire lane facing Washington Boulevard and Pepper Street, can be revised to be more consistent with the established block face patterns of the adjacent lower density residential development and avoid abrupt changes in the front yard character of the surrounding context. The building volumes facing Lincoln Avenue should also be set further back from the street to improve the feeling of privacy for the courtyards facing this street.
9. Consider varying the architectural style within the development to further break down the appearance of mass, and avoid monotony particularly along the street edges. Most of the residential works of Irving Gill were significantly smaller scaled projects and the style may be difficult to scale up to a larger sized development. Consider strategically revising the design of some of the building volumes with compatible architectural styles to introduce variety.
10. Revise the proposed landscaping plan to more significantly activate the communal open space areas to ensure they do not simply exist as pass-thru spaces or appear to be left-

over spaces, but as functional and integral parts of the development. The transition between the driveways and the proposed open space areas should also be clarified in future submittals. The driveway aisles should also be provided with appropriate landscaping treatments (such as vines) to soften the hardness of the garage elevations. In non-rectilinear open space areas, introduce more playful and creative garden design features, to make better use of these areas.


11. Provide clearer details regarding utilities, trash locations and access control to the site, including fencing and landscape treatments. Study if additional trash receptacles should be located throughout the site, rather than only located at the southern property line, which may be inconvenient for the majority of the residents.
12. Create a more continuous street edge along Lincoln Avenue. Consider adding an arcade or other similar building feature to connect the building volumes surrounding the two proposed courtyards and promote an increased sense of privacy for the development.
13. Further study how the covered parking spaces can be detached from the units and consolidated into a structure or located underground to promote a more meaningful pedestrian oriented environment and allow more flexibility with the site design and the arrangement of living spaces. As the project is proposed to be entitled under a Planned Development application, consider adding more height within the middle of the development to allow for more flexibility with the site plan to allow for the parking consolidation.
14. Provide a more detailed explanation of how the proposed project is consistent with the purposes of a Planned Development District, specifically, 17.26.020.C.1.c: "Encourage variety and avoid monotony in large developments by allowing greater freedom in selecting the means to provide access, light, open space, and amenity."

NEXT STEPS

This completes the Preliminary Consultation process. As your project moves forward to Concept Design Review, the new building design should endeavor to address and respond, in writing and/or graphically, to the comments above. If the comments are not satisfactorily addressed, revisions to the submitted plans may be required and the approval process for your project may be delayed.

Please contact me if you have any questions about this letter.

Sincerely,



Amanda Landry, AICP
Planner
Design and Historic Preservation Section
Tel: 626-744-7137
Email: alandry@cityofpasadena.net

cc: Tidemark; Address file