



**PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
STAFF REPORT**

**DATE:** MAY 25, 2021  
**TO:** DESIGN COMMISSION  
**FROM:** DAVID M. REYES, DIRECTOR, PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
**SUBJECT:** PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION - NEW CONSTRUCTION OF A FOUR STORY MEDICAL OFFICE BUILDING WITH SUBTERRANEAN PARKING  
590 SOUTH FAIR OAKS AVENUE

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**Project Description:**

This proposal is for the construction of a 99,946, square-foot, four-story medical office building with subterranean parking at 590 S. Fair Oaks Avenue. The project site is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of California Boulevard and Fair Oaks Avenue, with Edmonson Alley directly adjacent to the site to the east. The site is currently developed with a one-story non-historic commercial structure and a surface parking lot. No protected trees have been identified on the property.

The surrounding context is in transition, with the immediate built environment consisting of surface parking lots, older non-historic, one and two story commercial buildings, and newer three-to-four story medical office buildings, including the Huntington ambulatory surgery center, the HMRI building, and the Shriners for Children Medical Center. A fast food restaurant is directly to the south of the project site on the adjacent property. The Metro light rail line Fillmore Station is also located to the southeast of the project site. There are no historic resources within a four-block radius of the project site. However, there are other historic resources found within the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan area, including the former Southern California Cooperative Wind Tunnel at 950 South Raymond, the Glenarm Power Plant at 72 East Glenarm Street, and the former Pacific Electric Railroad Substation at 1154 S. Fair Oaks Avenue.

The proposed building is situated at the northwesterly corner of the site, closest to the intersection. The building is four-stories in height, with the tallest point at the northwest corner. At the easterly end of the site, the building is set back from Edmonson Alley and a landscaped buffer, passenger drop-off area and pedestrian lobby are located on the east elevation, facing the alleyway. An east-west oriented pedestrian paseo is located to the south of the building and connects the easterly lobby to a mid-block crossing that connects Edmondson Alley to Fair Oaks Avenue. A large pedestrian oriented building entrance is located on the west elevation, facing Fair Oaks Avenue. The vehicular entrance and exit ramp to the subterranean parking is located at the southwest corner of the site, from Fair Oaks Avenue. A large equipment/service enclosure with a rooftop garden is located at the southwesterly corner of the site. The project design employs the use of a green roof over the ground level service building to increase the permeable landscaped area of the site and enhance the view from the interior of the proposed

building and future neighboring buildings. The submittal preliminarily shows additional landscaping is proposed along all four elevations.

The building mass is generally rectangular, with extensive glazing and an exterior progression of solid areas intended to appear like a ribbon that runs across all elevations to create a distinct and unique expression on each elevation. Solar exposure is addressed through the use of a metal louvered system on the second through fourth floors on the east, west and south elevations. Projecting horizontal canopies are also located over each lobby entrance and at the southwest corner of the south elevation. Throughout each façade, distinct vertical mullions are aligned on each floor. Two exterior terraces have been integrated into the design on the fourth floor at the northeast and southwest corners as an amenity for the occupants. These terraces would be covered by a solar trellis and include landscaping.

The building has a clear base, middle, and top, and is designed in a Modern inspired architectural style with a flat roof, and significant areas of clear glazing. The primary material and finish of the building is a palette of anodized metal panels, mullion caps, flashings, louvers, and trims. The champagne metallic finish was chosen for the general warmth of its color and for its ability to range in color between a warm white, golden, and silver depending on the brightness and time of day.

**Applicable Design Guidelines:**

- Design-Related Goals and Policies in the Land Use Element of the General Plan
- Design Guidelines in the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan
- Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-family Residential Districts

**Previous/Existing Entitlements:**

- Conditional Use Permit No. 6831, effective March 8, 2021.

**Approvals Needed/Project Scheduling:**

- Concept and Final Design Review (Design Commission)
- Building Permits

**CEQA Clearance:**

This is preliminary consultation regarding design review and is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

**Staff Observations:**

**Applicable Design Guidelines:**

The following design guidelines are applicable to the project and should guide further development and study of the project as it moves forward in the design review process:

***Design-Related Policies in the Land Use Element of the General Plan:***

- 4.10: Locate and design buildings to relate to and frame major public streets, open spaces, and cityscape. New development at intersections should consider any number of corner treatments, and should balance safety and accessibility concerns with the vision of the area and the need for buildings to engage the street and create a distinct urban edge.
- 4.11: Require that development demonstrates a contextual relationship with neighboring structures and sites addressing such elements as building scale, massing, orientation, setbacks, buffering, the arrangement of shared and private open spaces, visibility, privacy, automobile and truck access, impacts of noise and lighting, landscape quality, infrastructure, and aesthetics.
- 5.2: Require buildings in the Central District, Transit Villages, Neighborhood Villages, and along corridors specified by the adopted specific plans to be located along the street/sidewalk and designed to promote pedestrian activity. This can be accomplished by incorporating transparent facades, small plazas, and dining areas; while locating parking to the rear or underground and placing primary entries on the street.
- 5.6: Discourage vehicle driveways on streets with higher pedestrian volumes within the Central District, Transit Villages, and Neighborhood Villages.
- 7.1: Design each building as a high-quality, long term addition to the City's urban fabric; exterior design and buildings material shall exhibit permanence and quality, minimize maintenance concerns, and extend the life of the building.
- 7.2: Allow for the development of a diversity of buildings styles. Support innovative and creative design solutions to issues related to context and environmental sustainability.
- 7.3: Require that new and adaptively re-used buildings are designed to respect and complement the defining built form, massing, scale, modulation, and architectural detailing of their contextual setting.
- 10.7: Encourage sustainable practices for landscape materials, landscape design, and land development.
- 23.1: Design and modulate buildings to avoid the sense of "blocky" and undifferentiated building mass, incorporate well-defined entries, and use building materials, colors, and architectural details complementing the neighborhood, while allowing flexibility for distinguished design solutions.
- 23.2: Minimize the visibility of parking areas and garages.
- 23.3: Provide appropriate setbacks, consistent with the surrounding neighborhood, along the street frontage and, where there are setbacks, ensure adequate landscaping is provided.
- 25.4: Require that new development protect community character by providing architecture, landscaping, and urban design of equal or greater quality than existing and by respecting the architectural character and scale of adjacent buildings.

***South Fair Oaks Avenue Specific Plan - Private Realm Design Guidelines:***

- 3.3.3-B.1: Buildings shall be located to the front of the parcel and parking areas shall be located to the rear of the parcel. Buildings shall have a mandatory zero setback at a portion of street-edge property lines. While the intention is to mass the building on the property

line, portions of the facade may be notched, recessed or extruded to accentuate Private Outdoor Nodes.

3.3.3-B.2 A maximum of two street driveways to any parcel over 200 feet shall be permitted.

For parcels with Fair Oaks Avenue addresses that include alley access, driveways from Fair Oaks Avenue should be one-way ingress only with egress to the alley. Driveways should be co-located with the Primary Building Entry and designed as pedestrian environments into which vehicles are integrated. Driveway design features should include paving and landscape.

3.3.3-B.3 Private Nodes include provision of open space and encouragement for architectural

enhancements that foster these human needs in the urbanized and private enterprise conditions of the Specific Plan area. Private Node design should be based upon the intended type of development, correlated human activities and program of uses as determined by the owner and architect. Private nodes should be integrated with the design of the building and site and serve as focal points of emphasis. There are two types of Private Nodes. A Private Outdoor Node is a required outdoor open space. Private Nodes shall be used in lieu of yards as set forth in Section 3.3.3-C.1.5. A Private Indoor Node is an indoor space such as a lobby, atrium or corridor. Private Indoor Nodes are expressed as architectural volumes as set forth in Section 3.3.3-C.1.2.

3.3.3-B.4.1 Parking lots and/or structures, service and loading areas shall be located to the rear of the property behind the building and along the rear property line.

3.3.3-C.1.1 Architectural design in the Specific Plan area should emphasize the distinction between the "interaction spaces" and the "work/service spaces" given the program of uses for a building. Each building will have an architectural program of uses that sets forth the activities and their spatial and functional requirements such as size, character and adjacency to one another: To emphasize in architectural design terms the distinction between the "interaction spaces" and the "work/service spaces" means to create perceptible differences between the character and identity of these parts as follows: Architects should utilize such elements as volume, massing, materials, proportion and scale, among others, to create these design distinctions. Interaction spaces are Private Indoor Nodes as set forth in Section 3.3.3-C.1.2. They should be prominently placed on a site to be seen from the street and to enhance the public realm. They should be placed to terminate vistas, to anchor street corners and along street edges, among others. Work and services spaces include laboratories, equipment rooms, rest rooms and storage, among others. They should be designed as "background" spaces utilizing a regular bay rhythm and modulation placed, for example, internally to the building or along non street property edges.

3.3.3-C.2.1 Primary Building Entries should be located at any point along the front property line or may be setback a maximum of 15 feet from the front property line to the front surface of the doorway. Any retail use should be accessed directly from a public sidewalk. A Primary Building Entry should be architecturally expressed.

***Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-family Residential Districts:***

- 1.1: Relationship to Public Realm. Buildings should be oriented to positively define and frame adjacent public streets, and/or public or common spaces, while promoting the collective form of neighborhoods by:
- 2.2: New buildings should be designed with frontages that activate the street by providing direct access to their ground floor dwellings and commercial spaces.
- 2.3: Buildings on corner lots should be designed to acknowledge their particular location. Different frontage types can be used on each of the two street facing facades, the same frontage type can be used on each facade, or a frontage type can wrap around the corner from one facade to the other.
- 3: New buildings placed in significant urban sites (termination of streets, corner lots, adjacent to public or historic buildings) should be designed to reflect the prominence of their location.
- 9.4: When an alley is present, parking should be accessed from the alley.

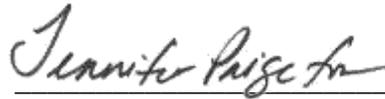
**Potential Design Issues:**

1. The architectural “ribbon” concept is a visually striking component of the design, and future submittals shall include details and information to show how the glazing and metal louver system are detailed and appropriately articulated from the ribbon so that it retains its visual prominence and effectively provides texture and movement to an otherwise solid cubic mass. Details for the lower level canopies and upper floor terraces should also be provided.
2. Clear glazing is a significant component of the design on all levels. Future submittals shall include preliminary interior floor plans and a discussion of how the interior programming may appear through the glazing to ensure the design concept is effectively executed. The proportions and specifications for the glazing will be critical to ensure the success of the proposed design and success of the “ribbon” concept and future submittals shall consistently depict the proportions of this concept to the extent possible.
3. The location of the vehicular access ramp from Fair Oaks Avenue should be restudied to determine if it can be better coordinated with the passenger drop off area at Edmondson Alley. Consider directing all vehicular access from Edmonson Alley, or only provide ingress from Fair Oaks Avenue with egress to Edmondson Alley.
4. Clarify in future submittals how the corner engages with the intersection and acknowledges this highly visible, and heavily trafficked, intersection. Consider relocating the terraces on other levels and elevations in order to provide level of visual emphasis that the corner should have.
5. The location and detailing of the proposed paseo and the above ground mechanical enclosure should be further studied to ensure the paseo is a safe and comfortable space and that the enclosure effectively coordinates with the design of the building and paseo.

**Project Scheduling/Sequencing:**

- Concept and Final Design Review by the Design Commission
- Building Permits

Respectfully Submitted,



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**Attachments:**

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