



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: NOVEMBER 9, 2021

TO: DESIGN COMMISSION

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

SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR CONCEPT DESIGN REVIEW
NEW TWO-TO-THREE STORY, 34 UNIT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WITH
SUBTERRANEAN PARKING
256 N. MICHIGAN 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.
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 and, therefore, there are no unusual circumstances.

Findings for Compliance with the Tree Protection Ordinance

1. Acknowledge that a tree inventory identifies that one protected Coast live oak tree (*Quercus agrifolia*) on the subject property is proposed to be removed.
2. Find that the removal of the protected tree is permitted under finding #6 of the Tree Protection Ordinance (PMC Section 8.52.075.A) which *allows the removal of a protected tree if, "the project, as defined in Section 17.12.020, includes a landscape design plan that*

emphasizes a tree canopy that is sustainable over the long term by adhering to the replacement matrix adopted by resolution of the city council and included in the associated administrative guidelines,” and, therefore,

3. Approve the removal of Tree #1.

Findings for Alternative Main Garden Design Proposal

1. Find that the irregular polygon shaped main garden is consistent with PMC Section 17.22.080: “Minimum main garden dimensions: The main garden shall be a rectangular shape and shall have a minimum dimension of 20 feet in either direction. With approval through the design review process, an alternative shape for the main garden, private gardens, and ancillary gardens may be approved as long as the minimum total garden area and dimensions are met”; and
2. Approve the alternate main garden shape because it is an integral part of the design and reflects the irregularly shaped lot and because the total area complies with the minimum total garden area requirements in the Zoning Code.

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, the Design Guidelines in the East Pasadena Specific Plan and the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-Family Residential Districts; 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. The project shall comply with the conditions provided by the Departments of Public Works and Transportation, included in this report as Attachment B, to the satisfaction of said departments.
2. Additional seating or site features shall be incorporated into the westerly side of the interior courtyard to better activate this space.
3. The decorative metal gates and railings shall be revised to better reflect the chosen architectural style, and the tile fountain shall be a custom fountain, and not a pre-manufactured fountain.
4. The required Pasadena Building Elements and Craftsmanship Element shall be clearly identified in the plans submitted for Final Design Review.
5. The project features required to demonstrate compliance with the Climate Action Plan shall be clearly depicted in the plans submitted for Final Design Review

6. The new residential units shall incorporate into their design air filtration systems a minimum MERV 13 rating. Filter replacement shall be conducted as recommended by the manufacturer and the manufacturer's recommendations and records of filter replacement shall be maintained on-site for inspection by the City.
7. The residential building air intakes shall be installed on the façades furthest away from the 210 Freeway.
8. The applicant shall include an illustrated written response to each condition of approval associated with Concept Design Review in the submittal for Final Design Review. Brief written responses without accompanying diagrams are not acceptable.

BACKGROUND:

Project Overview

- General Plan Designation: Medium-High Density Residential
- Zoning: RM-32 (Multi-Family Residential)
- 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 for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-Family Residential Districts.
- Site: The subject site is a double-frontage lot with frontages along Michigan and Chester Avenues, located at 256 North Michigan Avenue (former Santa Fe railroad site) between East Walnut Street and East Corson Street, within the RM-32 (Multi-Family Residential) Zoning District. The site is comprised of two irregularly shaped parcels with a combined area of approximately 33,949 square feet. Currently, the site is partially developed with a surface parking lot and perimeter block walls and chain link fences, which are proposed to be demolished. There are no existing structures on the property; however, one protected Coast live oak tree (*Quercus agrifolia*) on the subject property is proposed to be removed.
- Surroundings: Surrounding properties include a mix of multi-family residential vernacular buildings ranging from one story to three stories in height, and one-story single-family residential buildings. An adjacent commercial property to the south is developed with an office building and a surface parking lot that occupies approximately half of its site. The only nearby historic resource is a multi-family Spanish Vernacular bungalow court which is four properties north of the project site located at 275 N. Chester Avenue. With the exception of the one-story residences at adjacent properties to the north and south, the proposed building masses appear to be similar in scale and height compared to the predominantly multi-story multi-family residential character of the neighborhood including 2-to-3 story developments directly across the street on Michigan Avenue.
- Project Description: This proposal is for the construction of a new two-to-three-story, 34-unit residential development consisting of two buildings over a subterranean level of parking.

- Site Design: The two new buildings occupy the majority of the site with the exception of the garden and setback areas. Both buildings extend from east to west and are separated through the middle of the site by main and ancillary gardens that extend across the entire length of the property. Building A is situated along the northerly boundary and Building B along the southerly boundary. Two bridges extend over the central garden and connect the buildings at their second-floor levels. Vehicular access to the site consists of a driveway entrance and ramp near the southeast corner of the lot along Chester Avenue that would lead to the subterranean parking level. Walkways at the east and west provide direct pedestrian access from the street to the courtyard/central garden spaces and to the units fronting the street. Exterior corridors on the second-floor level of both buildings overlook the interior courtyard while providing access to all 16 townhouse units above the ground floor. In addition, two bridges are proposed to extend over the central courtyard and connect both buildings at different locations to allow for more efficient circulation at the second-floor level. Vertical circulation is proposed in the form of an elevator located at the central ancillary garden in the middle of the site and serves as the primary pedestrian access between the parking and second-floor levels.
- Architectural Style: The buildings are designed in a generally Spanish Colonial Revival style with varying low-pitched roof forms and minimal height variation, repeating projecting and recessed building volumes, arcades, and a square tower. The building elevations also exhibit a greater amount of solid versus glazing elements, which is typical with Spanish Colonial Revival design. The proposed materials include a combination of stucco exterior wall coating, barrel tile roofing, wood shutters, and metal railings.
- Developer: Rose City Condominiums
- Architects: Lim Chang Rohling & Associates
- Landscape Architect: TGP

ANALYSIS:

Design Commission Comments from Preliminary Consultation

On June 11, 2019, 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 response are incorporated into the set of plans in Attachment A.

Commissioner Comments, June 11, 2019	Excerpt from Design Team Response	Staff Comments
1. Study how the massing and architectural character of the development is compatible with the surrounding context and the architectural character and legacy of Pasadena. The level of massing articulation proposed on	The design has been modified to better relate to the surrounding context and architectural character of the neighborhood. The third floor massing has been substantially reduced on both buildings from previous design submittals. The massing [and] articulation is now carried	The massing has been refined to be more contextually sensitive using appropriate and logical architectural strategies. The comment from Preliminary Consultation has been satisfactorily addressed.

<p>the south elevation of Building A and north elevation of Building B should be carried throughout all other sides of the buildings. The south elevation of Building B and north elevation of Building A appear simple in design and can benefit from layering (stepping back) the building volumes and application of elements such as arches, colonnades, and towers that are expressed on the courtyard-facing elevations. Consider having a limited palette of arches, balconies, window forms, etc.</p>	<p>throughout all sides of the buildings. The south elevation of Building B and the north elevation of Building A now have one, two and three story elements with a combination of shed, gable, and hip roofs. The interior courtyard elevations have been simplified but still maintain design details to create interest (archways, wood posts, corbels, wrought iron details).</p>	
<p>2. The massing of both buildings should be responsive to the adjacent one-story multi-family and single-family residences to the north and south of the site. Their scale and heights should also preserve the privacy and natural lighting conditions of existing adjoining residences</p>	<p>The massing of the buildings are revised to better respond to the one and two-story residences directly to the north and south of the project and to preserve privacy and natural light.</p>	<p>The building design has been revised in response to the Preliminary Consultation comment and now better relates to the adjacent context.</p> <p>Both buildings have incorporated one-story elements on each frontage, before transitioning to two and three story massing, with the overall volume of the third story being reduced throughout.</p> <p>The vertical circulation in the courtyards consists of unclosed staircases, covered bridges, and elevators, which serve as visual anchors in the courtyard and help to break the long central courtyard into spaces that are more distinct.</p> <p>The comment from Preliminary Consultation has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>3. Consider raising the buildings to be at level with the sidewalk along Michigan Avenue (highest point of the site)</p>	<p>The overall building massing was raised up slightly higher to reduce the step down from Michigan Avenue.</p>	<p>Although the grade separation at Michigan Avenue was not completely resolved, the difference was reduced to the extent possible while still being</p>

<p>and have the buildings step down on the side that fronts Chester Avenue to avoid siting the buildings below the sidewalk grade levels.</p>		<p>code compliant. The separation is not as severe as depicted in the Preliminary Consultation plans. Therefore, the comment from Preliminary Consultation has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>4. There are several combinations of roof forms proposed throughout the different floor levels; however, they do not appear to follow a clear design logic. Consider establishing a hierarchy of how and which parts of the buildings the different roof forms are incorporated to. For example, the one-story volumes can be articulated with flat roofs, the second story volumes may consist of gable and cross-gable forms, and the third-story volumes may consist of both roof forms in combination. Alternatively, different roof forms may be used to distinguish individual units.</p>	<p>Roof forms for all three levels have been revised to create differentiation and hierarchy in the massing. The ground floor and second floor roofs are mainly composed of shed roofs with flat parapets to relate to the existing Spanish bungalows. The third floor is predominantly hip roofs with gable elements to bring down the scale of the building and to hide mechanical equipment.</p>	<p>The plans have been revised between Preliminary Consultation and the current submittal so that the roof forms now clearly follow a logical hierarchy.</p> <p>The comment from Preliminary Consultation has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>5. Further explore the fenestration throughout the different sides of each building to create more dynamic facades. For example, window and door variations may be used to respond to the interior spaces of the buildings and emphasize the importance of each room. The bedroom windows should be enlarged to provide more lighting into the rooms.</p>	<p>Windows and door sizes have been reviewed and modified on all sides of the building. Various window sizes are provided to create more playful elevations. Where possible, we have enlarged windows and/or added French doors to create more variety and bring light into the interiors and create a spatial connection to the outdoor areas. Decorative shutters have also been added to provide color and detail.</p>	<p>The fenestration has been revised to better reflect the use of the interior spaces and bring more light into the interior of the units.</p> <p>The comment from Preliminary Consultation has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>6. Consider providing more prominent entrances and frontage elements for the</p>	<p>Front entries facing Michigan and Chester have been revised to provide additional prominence.</p>	<p>The design of the front entries have been revised to incorporate additional</p>

<p>units fronting Michigan and Chester Avenues by incorporating front porch elements in traditional forms to each of the four units in order to enhance their street presence. Landscaping may also be integrated to enhance the main entries.</p>	<p>Features include arched openings and shed roofs with decorative wood beams and brackets. New, carefully planned landscaping (trees and bushes) will complement and enhance the front elevations. A large focal tree near the entry walkway for each unit will provide further prominence to each front entry.</p>	<p>appropriate architectural features to help emphasize their distinction from the rest of the buildings.</p> <p>The comment from Preliminary Consultation has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>7. Consider rearranging the walkways of street-facing dwelling units to have direct access from the sidewalk in order to provide greater interaction with the neighborhood. In addition, further explore the catwalk design to enhance its interaction with the courtyard.</p>	<p>Walkways for front units have been revised to provide direct access from sidewalk on both Chester and Michigan. The interior catwalk/walkway was also redesigned to create massing, hierarchy, and interest within the courtyard.</p>	<p>The comment from Preliminary Consultation has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>8. Ensure that the communal open spaces for the project include amenities that will allow for their active use by the residents of the project. An additional staircase may be incorporated near the westerly bridge to facilitate interaction between the top and bottom dwelling units. Further study the location of stairs to encourage interaction at the courtyard. For instance, the stairs and elevator may be combined to encourage people to pass through the courtyard.</p>	<p>The main communal area includes a generous BBQ and sitting area with benches and tables. At the entry court facing Chester Avenue, there will be a large fountain with additional seating. Two open staircase will open directly into the courtyards.</p>	<p>The landscape plans and elevations show additional amenities that have been incorporated into the open space areas to ensure they can be utilized by residents and will not simply serve as pass through spaces. Further, exterior stairs with Spanish style detailing have been incorporated into the courtyard facing elevations.</p> <p>However, the westerly side of the centralized open space does not appear to have the same level of detail or amenities as the easterly side, and staff recommends a condition of approval that additional seating or site features be incorporated into the westerly side of the interior courtyard to better activate this space. As conditioned, the comment from Preliminary Consultation will be satisfactorily addressed.</p>

<p>9. Clearly specify whether security gates/fences are proposed at the site entrances. Plans shall specify the height of any proposed fences and/or gates.</p>	<p>A 6'0" tall tubular steel fencing and gate will be provided between the buildings on both sides of the lot.</p>	<p>The comment from Preliminary Consultation has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>10. On the plans and elevations submitted for Concept Design Review, provide additional notations to indicate where the Affordable Housing Concessions apply to the project.</p>	<p>The project complies with the applicable regulations pertaining to Affordable Housing.</p>	<p>This comment is no longer applicable, and the project complies with the PMC with respect to affordable housing requirements.</p> <p>The comment from Preliminary Consultation has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>
<p>11. Ensure that the project includes the required Pasadena Building Elements and Craftsmanship Element, identified in the plans submitted for Concept Design Review.</p>	<p>The project plans have been enhanced to include required Pasadena Building and Craftsmanship elements, including decorative iron gates, railings, tile fountains, masonry/terracotta stairs, exposed wood rafter tails, wood beams and corbels and second floor loggias.</p>	<p>The plans demonstrate sufficient compliance with the requirements and the comment from Preliminary Consultation has been satisfactorily addressed.</p> <p>However, staff recommends that this comment be repeated as a condition of approval to reinforce the importance of this concept. Staff also recommends an additional condition of approval that the decorative metal gates and railings be revised to better reflect the chosen architectural style, and the tile fountain be a custom, fountain, and not a pre-manufactured fountain.</p>
<p>12. New construction projects with an aggregate landscape area equal to or greater than 500 square feet requiring a building or landscape permit, plan check or design review are subject to the 2015 State Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO) Requirements. Landscape plans shall be submitted for staff review to verify compliance with the Model Water Efficient Landscape</p>	<p>See proposed landscape plans showing landscape and hardscape layout, proposed planning materials and hardscape materials.</p>	<p>The comment from Preliminary Consultation has been satisfactorily addressed.</p>

Ordinance		
<p>13. Review the Climate Action Plan (CAP) Consistency Checklist and, in your application for Concept Design Review, demonstrate consistency with Pasadena’s Climate Action Plan.</p>	<p>The proposed development provides consistency with the Pasadena Climate Action plan.</p>	<p>The plans are compliant with the Climate Action Plan requirements and the comment from Preliminary Consultation has been satisfactorily addressed.</p> <p>However, staff recommends that this comment be reinforced with a condition of approval that the project features required to demonstrate compliance with the Climate Action Plan be clearly depicted in the plans submitted for Final Design Review.</p>

Programming and Circulation

The two new buildings occupy the majority of the site with the exception of the garden and setback areas. Both buildings extend from east to west and are separated through the middle of the site by main and ancillary gardens that extend across the entire length of the property. Building A is situated along the northerly boundary and Building B along the southerly boundary. Two bridges extend over the central garden and connect the buildings at their second-floor levels. Vehicular access to the site consists of a driveway entrance and ramp near the southeast corner of the lot along Chester Avenue that would lead to the subterranean parking level. Walkways at the east and west provide direct pedestrian access from the street to the courtyard/central garden spaces and to the units fronting the street. Exterior corridors on the second-floor level of both buildings overlook the interior courtyard while providing access to all 16 townhouse units above the ground floor. In addition, two bridges are proposed to extend over the central courtyard and connect both buildings at different locations to allow for more efficient circulation at the second-floor level. Vertical circulation is proposed in the form of an elevator located at the central ancillary garden in the middle of the site and serves as the primary pedestrian access between the parking and second-floor levels.

Overall, the revised programming of the building and site is consistent with the applicable design guidelines and, as noted in the table above and, is as responsive as possible to the Commission’s Preliminary Consultation comments. The design of the site encourages pedestrian activity and the active use of open spaces, as residents must travel through the common areas to access the individual units, and the development has significant pedestrian access from the sidewalk to the street facing units and the central garden space. Although the grade difference between Michigan Avenue and the buildings was not able to be fully resolved due to height restrictions, the difference is now less severe and does not present a significant issue,

Orientation

The proposed development is located on a through-lot and the new buildings are appropriately oriented toward both Chester Avenue and Michigan Avenue. As described in more detail in the

table above, the design has been refined from Preliminary Consultation to include more architecturally consistent frontage types, pedestrian entrances and primary windows facing both streets. Within the site, the majority of the openings and unit entrances are oriented toward the centralized common garden spaces, in order to maintain the privacy of adjacent lower scaled developments. Smaller openings and private open spaces are located on secondary elevations that face the adjacent properties.

Height, Massing and Modulation

As noted in the table above, the massing and height of the development has been revised and the project has incorporated a more gradual stepped design as seen from Michigan and Chester Avenues. The overall bulk and mass of the third floor has also been refined and alternative roof forms utilized to mitigate the appearance of mass for the project as seen from the north and south. Overall, the modulation depicted in the elevation drawings is appropriate and responsive to the design guidelines and previous comments from the Commission.

Architectural Style and Detailing

The chosen architectural style for the proposed development is based on the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The buildings are designed with varying low-pitched roof forms and minimal height variation, repeating projecting and recessed building volumes, arcades, and a square tower. The building elevations also exhibit a greater amount of solid versus glazing elements, which is typical with Spanish Colonial Revival design. The proposed materials include a combination of stucco exterior wall coating, barrel tile roofing, wood shutters, and metal railings.

As noted in the table above, the roof forms, massing, articulation, fenestration and building orientation have been refined between Preliminary Consultation to Concept Design Review, and the various individual components of the design better reflect the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural reference. Additionally, finer grained detailing, such as shutters and iron grates, were also incorporated into the design. Overall, the concept of the proposed changes better reflects the design inspiration and is more consistent with the applicable design guidelines. The exact specifications of the final detailing for all architectural features, colors, and materials will be reviewed more extensively as part of Final Design Review.

Pasadena Building Elements/Craftsmanship Features

Section 17.22.080. E of the Pasadena Municipal code requires new multi-family developments subject to the RM City of Gardens development standards to feature one Craftsmanship and two Building Elements. Craftsmanship elements are described as a feature such as iron grates, tile fountains, cast terra cotta, wood work, stenciled ornament or other elements as approved by the Design Review authority. Building Elements are described as upper floor loggias, roofed balconies supported by brackets or by columns at the ground floor, exterior wooden or masonry stairs with closed risers, or tile or masonry fountain, or other elements as approved by the Design Review authority. The proposed project includes tiled fountains and seat walls, woodwork, upper floor loggias, decorative wood corbels and beam ends and, exterior stairs and therefore, complies with the requirement.

Compatibility

As noted in the table above, the orientation and massing of the proposed new buildings have been refined between Preliminary Consultation and Concept Design Review and the overall design is now more compatible with its immediate surroundings, particularly the nearby lower scaled residential context, in terms of height, massing, setbacks and architectural design. The fenestration has also been revised so that the larger openings of units engage more with the central open space and adjacent streets, than with the secondary openings on the north and south elevation to help maintain privacy for adjacent properties and the individual units.

Conceptual Landscape Design

The proposed landscape plans on Sheets L1-4 depict a plan with a broad palette of climate appropriate groundcovers, shrubs, and vines that appropriately complement the chosen architectural style. The landscape design also includes an extensive number of trees in varying sizes and species ranging from standard 24-inch box sizes up to a massive 60-inch *Quercus ilex* (Holly Oak). Other proposed tree species include *Arbutus* “Marina” (Marina strawberry tree), *Jacaranda mimosifolia* (Jacaranda), *Olea europea* (fruitless olive) and *Archontophoenix cunningham* (king palm). As noted in the table above, the landscape plans include hardscape details and notations for site features such as a barbecue counter with sink, decorative fountains, and seat walls with decorative tiles.

Protected Tree Removal

The application includes a tree inventory that identifies removal of one protected tree (# 1, a *Quercus agrifolia* with diameter-at-breast-height (“dbh”) of 40”). The Tree Protection Ordinance (TPO) Finding #6, allows the removal of a protected tree if, “the project, as defined in Section 17.12.020, includes a landscape design plan that emphasizes a tree canopy that is sustainable over the long term by adhering to the replacement matrix adopted by resolution of the city council and included in the associated administrative guidelines.” Given the large number of trees that are proposed to be planted on the site, including the minimum two 36-inch box and four 24-inch box trees required pursuant to the Tree Replacement Matrix, and that Tree #1 is in the middle of the site, and is not a prominent feature, staff recommends approval of the proposed private tree removal.

Alternative Main Garden Shape

The proposed development is subject to the City of Gardens Development standards. The City of Gardens regulations acknowledge that the presence of gardens and landscaped areas creates the ambiance of Pasadena more than any other factor. Neighborhood character and quality depend on the coherence, embellishment, and visibility of courts and gardens, on the size and consistency of front yards, and on the frequency and uniformity of street trees. Mandatory requirements regulating the size and configuration of yards and gardens are therefore a central feature of these provisions. Specifically, Section 17.22.080.A.3, requires that the main garden be a rectangular shape with a minimum dimension of 20 feet in either direction. With approval through the Design Review process, an alternative shape for the main garden, private gardens, and ancillary gardens may be approved as long as the minimum total garden area and dimensions are met.

The plans were routed to Current Planning staff to verify compliance with the City of Gardens development standards. The plans were verified to comply with all applicable development

standards, including the minimum total garden area and dimensions, except that the main garden shape is an irregular polygon and not an exact rectangle. As the site itself is an unusual shape and the garden is an integral part of the site design and fulfills the purpose of the City of Gardens regulations, staff recommends the Design Commission approve the alternative irregular polygon main garden shape.

COMMENTS FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS:

Staff routed the project for comment to several City Departments, as well as other divisions of the Planning & Community Development Department, including the Public Works, Transportation, Fire and Housing Departments and the Building, Current Planning and Cultural Affairs Divisions of the Planning & Community Development Department. The Building Division and Fire Department provided standard comments related to Building and Fire Code compliance. Current Planning confirmed that the plans comply with all applicable development standards except as mentioned above. The recommended conditions from the Departments of Public Works and Transportation are included in Attachment B.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The project will be constructed on a previously developed site in an urbanized area and is consistent with the General Plan, and Zoning designations that apply to the property. Staff engaged Impact Sciences, 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 class 32, "infill development projects." 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 air quality and noise/vibration technical studies prepared (Attachment C), 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.

Climate Action Plan Consistency

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 plans and in their written responses in Attachment A the 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. As noted in the table above, 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:

The project design has been refined to satisfactorily address the comments provided during Preliminary Consultation and is consistent with the design guidelines in the Neighborhood Commercial & Multi-Family Residential Districts. Staff recommends approval of the application for Concept Design Review, with minor conditions of approval to be addressed at Final Design Review.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Reyes
Director of Planning and
Community Development

Prepared by:



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Reviewed by:



Leon E. White
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Attachments:

- A. Current plans & elevations
- B. Recommended conditions from the Departments of Public Works and Transportation
- C. Air Quality, Noise and Vibration Technical Studies