



## PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

### STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** FEBRUARY 8, 2022

**TO:** DESIGN COMMISSION

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

**SUBJECT:** APPLICATION FOR FINAL DESIGN REVIEW  
NEW CONSTRUCTION OF A FIVE-STORY MIXED DEVELOPMENT WITH 42 RESIDENTIAL UNITS ABOVE 5,784 SQUARE FEET OF COMMERCIAL SPACE AT THE GROUND LEVEL AND 74 SUBTERRANEAN PARKING SPACES  
233 N. HUDSON AVENUE / 737 E. WALNUT STREET

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#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

The staff recommends that the Commission:

#### **Environmental Determination**

Find that the application for Final Design Review was subject to environmental review in the Categorical Exemption adopted by the City Council on July 16, 2018 for Affordable Housing Concession Permit (AHCP) #11866 and that there are no changes to the project, changed circumstances, or new information that would require further environmental review.

#### **Findings for Compliance with the Tree Protection Ordinance**

Acknowledge that there are no protected trees on the site.

#### **Findings for Final Design Approval**

1. Find that the project, upon implementation of the conditions of Final Design Review approval, will comply with the conditions of Concept Design Review;
2. Find that the project, upon implementation of the conditions of Final Design Review approval, will be consistent with the purposes of design review, the design-related goals and policies in the Land Use Element of the General Plan, and the Design Guidelines in the Central District Specific Plan; and,

3. Based on these findings, approve the application for Final Design Review subject to the following conditions, which shall be subject to staff review and approval prior to issuance of a building permit:

**Conditions:**

1. All mechanical and/or plumbing vents that are visible along the street-facing facades shall be studied for relocation to less prominent façade or roof planes. If it is not feasible to have them relocated from the street elevations, a thorough analysis of the reasoning for their location shall be provided for review.
2. The ground-floor interior circulation spaces shall fully engage the public realm. Apply transparency, a through visual access, or other solution to comply with this condition.
3. The proposed color of the non-permanent shade canopy atop the rooftop terrace garden shall be white or a neutral color that is complementary to the building hues.
4. The specification of the outdoor furnishings shall be provided for staff review and they shall be outdoor-rated, of high quality, with proven durability and consistent with the approved landscape plans.
5. The details of the decorative metal railing panels shall be revised to indicate a consistency with their appearance in the renderings.
6. The material board and renderings shall be revised to be consistent with the keyed elevations for materiality and color, and application.
7. Details of the storefront awnings, the architectural pergola atop the fourth-floor roof deck, and the pergola of the flexible lawn space atop the roof-top garden terrace shall be provided. The structures shall be made of metal and be consistent with the overall style as indicated in the renderings, and be complementary in color to the bronze metals proposed for the project.
8. A revised rooftop plan shall be provided to indicate the location of all roof-mounted equipment and screening. The screening structures shall be designed in a manner that is complementary to the guardrails of the project in material, color, and detailing.
9. Scuppers and other water channeling devices shall be specified in detail and location in plan and elevation. These drainage features shall be integrated into the overall design of the building.
10. Approval of a Master Sign Plan shall be required prior to installation of any commercial signage on the building.
11. The project shall comply with the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance and any changes to the proposed landscape design that may be required shall be reviewed and approved by staff prior to issuance of a building permit.

12. A copy of this decision letter, including written responses to each condition indicating how and where they are addressed, shall be included in the plans submitted for building permit plan check.
13. The lighting temperature specified on the final plans shall not rise above 3,000 kelvin for all proposed exterior fixtures. Replacement lighting elements should be regulated by maintenance staff in the future.
14. An 8' x 8' minimum mock-up panel of the building finishes shall be provided and reviewed by staff prior to construction and installation.
15. Prior to issuance of a building permit, submit to staff written confirmation from utility providers (Pasadena Water & Power and The Gas Company) that the utility equipment shown on the plans are sufficient to meet the demands of the project and that the locations shown in the plans are approved.
16. This project will be subject to 50%, 75%, and 100% inspection points and sign-off by staff of the Design & Historic Preservation section to ensure that the project is constructed as indicated and specified in the decision letter and that all work is performed consistent with the approved plans.

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The application presents design revisions in response to the conditions of approval from the previous Concept Design Review phase in addition to providing more detailed plans, elevations, sections and color and material information for the project. The current drawings are more fully detailed and present a palette of materials that is consistent with the design of the building. Upon reviewing the drawings in detail, staff recommends approval of the application with the conditions of approval outlined above and explained within this report.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

On September 18, 2018, the Design Commission approved an application for Concept Design Review for construction of a five-story mixed-use project at 233 N Hudson / 737 E. Walnut Avenue. On September 24, 2018, the Concept Design Review approval was appealed by a member of the public. The applicant and appellant were able to come to a private resolution regarding the basis of the appeal and the appeal was withdrawn by the appellant on December 3, 2018. Therefore, the effective date of the Concept Design Review approval is December 3, 2018. On October 31, 2019, staff of the Design and Historic Preservation Section approved an administrative Time Extension of the approved Concept Design Review of one additional year with an expiration date of December 3, 2020. In addition, on April 20, 2020, pursuant to City Council Resolution 9774, the City Manager, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, extended all time limits for land use applications approved before July 1, 2020 for one additional year. Therefore, the expiration date of the Concept Design Review was December 3, 2021. The Final Design Review application for the same project was submitted prior to this deadline.

## **Project Overview**

- General Plan Designation: Medium Mixed Use (0 – 2.25 FAR, 0-87 DU/Acre)
- Zoning: CD-3 (Central District Specific Plan, Walnut Housing 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 project site is a relatively flat, rectangular-shaped lot that is approximately 16,300 square feet, and is currently vacant. The project site is located at the northwest corner of East Walnut Street and North Hudson Avenue.
- Surroundings: Surrounding properties include five-story residential buildings to the north and east, two-to-five story mixed-use and general commercial to the south, and two-story general commercial to the west. Though there are no known historical resources within the immediate vicinity, the nearest historical resource is the Lukens House at 267 North El Molino Avenue and the former JW Robinson Pasadena (Target) which is an eligible historic resource located at 777 East Colorado Boulevard, two blocks to the south of the subject property.
- Project Description: The project involves the new construction of a five-story mixed-use development with 42 residential units above 5,784 square feet of commercial space at the ground level and 74 subterranean parking spaces.
- Site Design: The generally “L-shaped” building would occupy almost the entirety of the site, with a small rectangular courtyard located near the northeast corner, facing North Hudson Avenue and adjacent to a vehicular access ramp at the northeast corner of the site, which leads to the subterranean parking garage.
- Architectural Style: Contemporary with references to Art Deco
- Developer: DC Hudson Holdings, LLC
- Architect: Studio G Architects / Javier Gonzalez
- Landscape Architect: Korn Randolph Landscape Architecture

## **ANALYSIS:**

### **Conditions of Concept Design Review:**

Below are the Commission’s conditions of approval and recommendations from Concept Design Review for the project, as well as the architect’s responses and staff’s comments. Refer to Attachment D for complete written and graphic responses from the architect as well as Attachment A for the complete set of revised plans, elevations, wall sections, architectural details and materials specifications and imagery.

Concept Design Review Conditions of Approval, September 11, 2018:	Architect Responses	Staff Analysis:
<p>1. The metal fencing on the east elevation shall be further revised to provide for more visual permeability into the garden area.</p>	<p>“Fence was revised to provide more open space and view into the garden space from the street.”</p>	<p><i>This condition has been satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>The metal fencing has been redesigned to incorporate additional transparency while still retaining a decorative motif.</p>
<p>2. Enlarged details for the control joints and stone banding shall be provided in the submittal for Final Design Review to ensure these architectural features are appropriately applied.</p>	<p>“Details have been incorporated. See detail sheets A-5.5, and A-6.1 to A-6.4.”</p>	<p><i>This condition has been satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>The applicant has provided details of the stucco expansion joints and indicated their locations on the elevations. Details of the stone cladding have also been provided. The details can be found on sheets: A-5.5, and A-6.1 to A-6.4.</p>
<p>3. Enlarged details for all vents shall be provided in the submittal for Final Design Review and the design of the vents shall be consistent with the overall architectural style.</p>	<p>“Details have been provided along with specifications. The vents are located in soffit areas at balconies, or directed to the roof as much as possible. Visible vents will be painted to match the exterior wall material.”</p>	<p><i>This condition has been satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>Air-intake and ventilation vents are proposed to be located along the street-facing elevations. However, these visible vents will be strategically located within alignment of façade datum lines and painted to match the surrounding wall surface to be as minimally visible as possible. Additionally, the vents are square and simple in design to further minimize their visual impact on the exterior elevations. Still, a recommended condition of approval shall require for their possible relocation to non-street elevations and a thorough analysis as to their location if they cannot be relocated.</p>

<b>Concept Design Review Conditions of Approval, September 11, 2018:</b>	<b>Architect Responses</b>	<b>Staff Analysis:</b>
<p>4. Further study the internal circulation from the subterranean parking to the ground floor commercial to clarify how users may access the commercial space and ensure that the ground floor commercial uses are fully integrated with the public realm.</p>	<p>“A formal lobby was created at the ground floor, which could also allow a possible division of the commercial space.”</p>	<p><i>This condition to be addressed with a condition of approval.</i></p> <p>An elevator lobby has been provided to divide the ground floor between the commercial space and the interior circulation. However, the plans appear to indicate a lack of transparency between the interior elevator lobby and the commercial space, thus preventing engagement with the public realm. A recommended condition of approval has been included to further study the engagement of the interior circulation spaces with the public realm. With this condition, this Concept Design condition can be resolved.</p>

<b>Concept Design Review Conditions of Approval, September 11, 2018:</b>	<b>Architect Responses</b>	<b>Staff Analysis:</b>
<p>5. Additional non-permanent shade structures shall be provided at the fifth floor open space area. Provide design details of the shade structures and seating for the Commission’s review during Final Design Review.</p>	<p>“A retractable shade canopy is specified in the landscape plans.”</p>	<p><i>This condition to be addressed with a condition of approval.</i></p> <p>The landscape plans specify the selection of non-permanent shade canopies by Fim (specification: Flexy Twin). A recommended condition of approval shall require for the color of the shade canopy to be white or a neutral color that is complementary to the hues of the building. Specifications on the outdoor seating and furnishings were not provided; however, a recommended condition of approval shall require for those items to be specified for staff review and approval. With these conditions, this Concept Design condition can be resolved.</p>
<p>6. The landscaping and open space plans submitted for Final Design Review shall include enlarged details for all landscape features and shall demonstrate that the open spaces will be activated with amenities to make them usable.</p>	<p>“The landscape plan has been revised.”</p>	<p><i>This condition has been satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>The landscape plans, particularly the roof top terrace garden, have been redesigned to accommodate a variety of passive and active uses with flexible spaces and various amenities to promote activation.</p>

Concept Design Review Conditions of Approval, September 11, 2018:	Architect Responses	Staff Analysis:
<p>7. The applicant shall reconsider incorporating the previously proposed Art Deco-inspired detailing.</p>	<p>Response not provided.</p>	<p><i>This condition has been satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>Though the proposed building style is contemporary, it does incorporate Art Deco motifs particularly at the corners with design details that emphasize verticality. Additional Art Deco elements can be found in the metal work of the balustrades and fencing.</p>
<p>8. The window and door details on the building shall be studied to ensure that they are deeply recessed, consistent with the chosen architectural style. Doors and windows with mullions shall be considered to be consistent with the chosen architectural style.</p>	<p>“Typical window depth is 3” minimum. See details on Sheet A-6.1.”</p>	<p><i>This condition has been satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>The applicant has provided details on sheet A-6.1 of the windows at each façade condition with a recessed depth that is reflective of the architectural style, while providing shadow lines to the façade planes.</p>
<p>9. Review the drawings for consistency between the renderings, floor plans and elevations and ensure that the floor plans are consistent with the elevation drawings and renderings provided for Final Design Review.</p>	<p>“A final rendering of the building will be completed once all revisions to the exterior design have been made.”</p>	<p><i>This condition to be addressed with a condition of approval.</i></p> <p>The architectural drawings are consistent between the floor plans and elevations, and the renderings appear to be consistent with the overall design; however, there are minor inconsistencies between the material board and the keyed elevations. A recommended condition of approval has been included to require for the material board and renderings to be consistent with the keyed elevations for materiality and color. With this condition, the Concept</p>

Concept Design Review Conditions of Approval, September 11, 2018:	Architect Responses	Staff Analysis:
		Design condition can be resolved.

**Materials & Colors:**

The project will utilize a traditional tripartite design through materiality and massing that is applied on all elevations. The majority of the building will be clad in smooth sand finish La Habra Stucco painted in two neutral colors (paint specifications: Natural Linen SW-9109, a light sand color, and Malabar SW-9110, a taupe color, both by Sherwin Williams). The building is proposed to be clad in several types of stone along the ground floor façade planes, comprising approximately the first 17 feet of the building façade. The base of the building will feature an approximately 3.5 foot-high stone wainscot consisting of a six-inch high by 24-inch wide split-face limestone cladding, capped by a two-inch thick protruding belt-course of the same stone (color specification: Cream). Above the base stone, the remaining portion of the building base is proposed to be clad in smooth 12-inch high by 24-inch wide limestone in a running bond pattern and finished by a two-inch thick protruding capstone (color specification: French White). The upper stone façade plane will be slightly recessed from the base wainscot, and both stone specifications are proposed to be from the same manufacturer, Coronado Stone. A protruding band that frames the balcony bays and a three-story storefront along North Hudson Avenue is proposed to be wrapped in a sheet metal by Reynobond (color specification: Anodized Medium Bronze). The balcony railings, rooftop railings, and site fencing and gates are also proposed to be made of a decorative metal. The windows and doors of the residential units are proposed to be aluminum in a light medium bronze (manufacturer: Arcadia Windows and Doors). Though details or specifications were not provided for the rooftop pergolas and storefront awnings, a recommended condition of approval shall require for these features to be constructed of metal, finished in a color that is complementary to the bronze of other metal features proposed for the project, and be consistent with the design indicated in the renderings.

The selected colors and products of the proposed material palette will provide a harmonious composition of texture, scale, visual interest, and permanence through their durability and contextual nature. Additionally, the application of the materials along the façade planes will further enhance the style of the building through shadow lines, visual depth, and overall rhythm of fenestration patterns and building forms.

Overall, the design is consistent with the design presented during the previous Concept Design Review. As outlined in the table above, a majority of the Concept Review conditions of approval have been addressed. Further refinement of previous concerns including additional details and product specifications can be addressed through the recommended conditions of approval listed above. These conditions include the requirement for further transparency and engagement between the ground-floor circulation and the public realm; color specifications of selected products; details of the metal railings; consistency between the renderings, material board, and plans; and details of architectural features including the storefront awnings, and upper-floor pergolas.

### **Mechanical Screening:**

A roof plan is provided indicating the location of the roof-mounted mechanical equipment. However, details are not provided on the screening element, as such, a recommended condition of approval shall require for all rooftop equipment to be screened from view, and for the screening structures to be designed in a manner that is consistent with the railings proposed for the project, in color, material and detailing.

The architect has provided enlarged details of the vent pipes, façade air intakes, and roof-top drainage/overflow systems. However, the plans do not specify the type or the location of the drainage scuppers. A recommended condition of approval shall require for the specifications of the scuppers to be provided and for the plans to indicate their locations which shall be fully integrated with the design of the building. Additionally, the proposed vent covers located along the façade planes are square in shape and simple in nature, will be painted to match the surrounding façade plane, and are generally located and aligned with the datum lines of the façade planes. Still, to ensure high quality design, a recommended condition of approval shall require for the study of relocating all mechanical/plumbing vents to be relocated away from the street-facing facades, and if this is infeasible, to provide a thorough analysis for their locations.

### **Landscaping:**

The landscape plans indicate proposed hardscaping, planting, and arrangement of outdoor amenities and furnishings. The ground-level garden is proposed to be naturalistic in design with serpentine edge planting beds and footpaths of decomposed granite. A 48-inch box size specimen tree (*Ginkgo biloba*) is proposed to be planted with additional understory plantings of perennials and groundcovers. A 24-inch box Japanese Magnolia (*Acer palmatum*) is also proposed for this garden along with a pre-cast circular fountain (manufacturer: Dura Art Stone, color: charcoal) and outdoor furnishings. This garden is located adjacent to the entry arcade for the residential units. The decking of the entry arcade is proposed to be composed of saw-cut patterned concrete with integral colors by Davis (color specifications: Silversmoke 8084, and Pebble 641). As an alternative, the landscape architect has also proposed a grey deck roof paver by Stepstone Inc. (color specifications Granada White 1801, and Almond 1806).

The decking of second-floor patio terraces are proposed to have the same finishes as the ground floor arcade, in only one color option (concrete: Pebble; alternative pavers: Almond). The patio terraces are proposed to be have potted 24-inch box trees (*Arbutus unedo* or *Feijoa sellowiana*) in pre-cast 42" x 42" x 30"H planters by Tournesol Siteworks (color specification: shark; finish: acid etch). Additional rectangular planters (size: 120" x 24" x 30"H) by the same manufacturer and in the same color and finish are proposed to line the terraces at select locations.

The upper floor rooftop garden is proposed to have the same hardscaping as the ground-level garden. Common amenities and seating rooms for the project residents are proposed for this garden level including a fire pit with surrounding seating flanked by chaise lounges and additional seating shaded by the Flexy Twin Canopies, an outdoor barbeque/outdoor kitchen with long dining table, a game table, and a shaded artificial turf area that acts as a flexible zone for active and passive uses including the screening of projected movies on a projection wall. The rooftop garden is proposed to be planted with a variety of trees and plants planted in

differing sizes of the Tournesol Siteworks planters of the same color and finish of the second-floor patio terraces.

**Lighting:**

Elegant, and stylistically-complementary wall sconces are proposed to adorn the exterior street-level façade planes, centered between the storefront bays, and piers of the building corners. The proposed sconces are manufactured by West Elm and will be finished in a matte bronze (specification: 18" LED Sconce). The sconces will provide added human-scaled elements to the building, while also providing additional ambient lighting at the public right-of-way. The exterior lighting will be subject to a standard recommended condition requiring lighting temperatures to not exceed 3,000 Kelvin.

**Signage:**

Detailed signage plans are not provided for this review. Due to the Zoning Code requirement of design review for signs on all new development projects, staff recommends that this requirement be reinforced with a condition of approval requiring a Master Sign Plan prior to the installation of any commercial signage for the building.

**Environmental Review & Comments from Other Departments:**

Environmental review pursuant to CEQA was conducted in conjunction with Affordable Housing Concession Permit (AHCP #11866) and this application does not propose any changes to the project that would require additional environmental review. In addition, other City departments provided conditions of approval as part of the project's Affordable Housing Concession Permit, which shall remain valid as part of this Final Design Review and the Plan Check and Building Permitting process.

**CONCLUSION:**

Upon implementation of recommended conditions of approval, the project will comply with the conditions of Concept Design Review. The submitted drawings include materials specifications and architectural details that are high-quality and compatible with the overall building design. Staff recommends that the Commission approve the application for Final Design Review with conditions described in this report, which will be further reviewed by staff during Building Plan Check.

Respectfully submitted:



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David M. Reyes  
Director of Planning & Community Development  
Department

Prepared by:



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Reviewed by:



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Attachments:

- A. Project Plans and Renderings
- B. Landscape Plans
- C. Material Board
- D. Applicant Responses to Concept Design Conditions of Approval
- E. Project Design Narrative
- F. Tree Inventory
- G. AHCP #11866 City Council Approval and Department Conditions