



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: APRIL 12, 2022

TO: DESIGN COMMISSION

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

SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR FINAL DESIGN REVIEW
NEW TWO-TO-FOUR-STORY 58-UNIT MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WITH ONE-LEVEL SUBTERRANEAN PARKING
1870-1890 E. WALNUT STREET; 175 N. GREENWOOD AVENUE; 170 N. PARKWOOD AVENUE

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 Hearing Officer for Conditional Use Permit #6846 on April 21, 2021, and that there are no changed circumstances or new information which would require further environmental review.

Findings for Compliance with the Tree Protection Ordinance

Acknowledge that there are no protected trees proposed to be removed in conjunction with the proposed project.

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 for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-Family Residential Districts; and,

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

BACKGROUND:

On April 21, 2021, the project received a Conditional Use Permit (CUP #6846) by the Hearing Officer for the development of a multi-family residential project within one-quarter mile of the Allen Station for the Metro L-Line light-rail in the transit-oriented development (TOD) area, along with an Affordable Housing Concession Permit for the following:

1. Density Bonus: A 26% increase in density to allow 58 total units, where the allowed base density is 45 units. To achieve the density bonus, the project includes 28 moderate-income units.
2. Concession - FAR: To allow a FAR of 2.0 in the CG zone, where the maximum FAR is 0.8.
3. Concession – Open Space: To allow 10,970 square feet (18 percent of the building net floor area) of open space, where the requirement is 17,948 square feet (30 percent) in the CG zone.
4. Concession - Building Height: To allow a height of 55'-4", where the maximum is 45' in the CG zone. To allow a height of 44'-4", where the maximum height is 32' in the RM-16-PK zone.
5. Tree Retention – Modification: To allow a 10' front yard setback on Parkwood Avenue, where the minimum required front yard setback is 31'-7" in the RM-16-PK zone.

On July 13, 2021, the project received Concept Design Review approval through the Design Commission with a total of eight conditions of approval.

The application for Final Design Review 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.

Project Overview

- General Plan Designation: Low Commercial (0 – 1.00 FAR) & Medium Density Residential (0-16 DU/Acre)
- Zoning: CG (Commercial General) & RM-16-PK (Multi-Family Residential, 16 units per acre, Parking Overlay 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 for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-family Residential Districts.
- Site: The site is comprised of four adjoining lots totaling approximately one acre in size on the south side of E. Walnut Street, between N. Parkwood Avenue and N. Greenwood

Avenue. It is rectangular in shape and is currently developed with one- and two-story commercial and automotive buildings as well as a non-historic single-family residence on the Parkwood Avenue property. A tree inventory provided with the application identifies eight trees on site, one of which is a protected specimen tree, as well as two street trees along the property's frontages.

- Surroundings: Surrounding properties include one- and two-story commercial and industrial buildings along Walnut Street, one- and one-and-one-half-story single-family residences along Greenwood Avenue, and one- and two-story single- and multi-family residences along Parkwood Avenue. A recently constructed four-story mixed-use building is approximately 500 feet to the east of the site's eastern boundary at the northwest corner of Walnut Street and Allen Avenue. Nearby designated historic resources include the Woodbury Well directly across Walnut Street from the project site (1930, Aubrey St. Clair), historic signs at 2114 E. Foothill Boulevard (In N Out Burger, 1952), and 1821 E. Walnut St. (Bells & Vaughn Frame & Wheel Aligning, 1946), and two houses at 116 and 119 N. Meridith Avenue (1911 and 1912, respectively).
- Project Description: The project involves the demolition of the commercial automotive buildings and the single-family residence on the project site for the construction of a new one-to-four-story, 58-unit multi-family residential development with a gross square footage of approximately 81,680 square feet. A tree inventory submitted with the application indicates that there are a total of eight on-site trees, one of which is protected (*Phoenix reclinata*), and two public street trees (*Quercus agrifolia*). The applicant is proposing to remove all non-protected trees, and retain the protected tree. No street trees are proposed to be removed. One level of subterranean parking with 97 spaces is also proposed.
- Site Design: The proposed project is arranged atop a garden podium, and composed of eight one-to-four-story buildings with two centralized, open-air courtyards. The entry to the parking garage is located at the southeast corner of the project site, off of North Greenwood Avenue. A series of terraced steps and entries comprise the project's street frontages, and a multi-use zone comprises the 10-foot wide utility easement at the south boundary of the property.
- Architectural Style: Post-Modern
- Developer: Heritage Housing Partners
- Architect: Moule & Polyzoides, Architects and Urbanists
- Landscape Architect: Fong Hart Schneider + Partners

ANALYSIS:

Conditions of Concept Design Review:

Below are the Commission's conditions of approval and recommendations from Concept Design Review for the project, including a synopsis of the architect's responses and staff's comments. Refer to Attachment C for complete written responses from the architect as well as Attachment

B for the complete set of revised plans, elevations, wall sections, architectural details and materials specifications and imagery.

Concept Design Review Conditions of Approval: July 13, 2021	Architect Responses	Staff Analysis:
1. Depict all window and door openings on the floor plans and ensure that the locations of openings are consistent with the floor plans and elevations.	"All window and door openings are shown on all floors plans and correspond with their locations shown on all elevations. See A2 and A3 series."	<p><i>This condition has been satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>The plans and elevations have been revised to reflect this comment.</p>
2. Further study improvements to the pedestrian character of the project, which may include such measures as, refining and providing details of the proposed ground-level canopy and frame structures at unit entrances, providing additional landscape along the street frontages and providing a street-accessible entrance to unit 102. Additional measures could include, enlarging the community room arcade/ground-floor openings, further softening patio and stairwell walls along the street, providing additional detail and integration of the courtyard openings, and/or other measures that may be proposed by the design team.	"The patio walls have been softened to include transparent fencing and green screens. In addition portions of the patio guardrails have been pulled back to provide additional planting. See Sheets L1.02 Symbol 16 and Sheet L2.03 Symbol 14. In addition all street facing ground floor units have direct entry from the street. See Sheet A2.01."	<p><i>This condition has been satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>The project has been revised to reflect the comments. All ground-floor units that face the street have direct entry to the street. Additionally, vegetated screen walls, and terraces front the building along Walnut Street and Parkwood Avenue.</p>

Concept Design Review Conditions of Approval: July 13, 2021	Architect Responses	Staff Analysis:
<p>3. Provide community room entries in close proximity to the courtyards to enhance the physical connections between these communal-use spaces within the project.</p>	<p>“The Community Room has been significantly reconfigured into 3 portions. The west side has become an HOA Lounge, the center has become a lobby, and the east side is now a party room for residents. In addition the party room has a new entrance linking it directly to the East Courtyard. See sheet A2.11.”</p>	<p><i>This condition has been satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>The public amenity spaces have been reconfigured into multi-varied program rooms and are centrally located to be within easy access to the primary building entry along Walnut Street, and within close proximity to the two interior courtyards. There are also multiple entries to these spaces that are in close proximity to the outdoor courtyards.</p>
<p>4. Provide additional means of articulation to break up the blank wall condition at the east end of the south elevation and ensure it is compatible with the building overall. In addition, provide for Final Design Review the elevations of the setback upper floors on the south, east and west elevations. Ensure that these walls are articulated in a manner consistent with the overall design and to avoid blank wall conditions that would be visible from the public realm.</p>	<p>“The elevation of the east end of the South elevation has been reconfigured as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the ground floor the wall has a series of openings. • On the second floor it has an open roof community space for residents. <p>This semi-open community room helps to lower the massing of the 3-story building behind it.”</p>	<p><i>This condition has been satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>The southeast elevation has been revised, reflective of the architect’s responses. Additionally, the open roof terrace over the garage entry will provide activated use through outdoor amenity programming.</p>
<p>5. Further study the pyramidal tower and angular elements proposed to ensure that they are consistent with the overall design and follow a clear design logic. In addition, further study the gable-roof forms shown on the south elevation to ensure consistency with the primary roof forms proposed.</p>	<p>“The tower has been further refined to be more integrative with the overall design. The pyramid element has been removed.</p> <p>The previous metallic top has been replaced with a vertical continuation of the brick language. The tower now serves as a way-finding marker.”</p>	<p><i>This condition has been satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>The tower element has been revised to be consistent with the architectural style of the building, while providing added height and visual interest, and serving as a way-finding element. The gable roof forms along the south elevation have been revised to a continuation of the adjoining hipped mansard roofs.</p>

Concept Design Review Conditions of Approval: July 13, 2021	Architect Responses	Staff Analysis:
<p>6. The seating element shown within the public right-of-way along Walnut Street is not approved and requires separate review and approval by the Department of Public Works. The matching seating element within the property along Walnut Street shall be further studied to better integrate it into the design and to avoid potential conflicts with pedestrian travel and views into the courtyard, such as providing integrated seat walls into nearby proposed planters.</p>	<p>“The seating element shown within the public right-of-way has been removed. Current pedestrian seating integrated into raised planters is provided at zaguan entrances. See sheets L1.02 and L2.0.”</p>	<p><i>This condition to be addressed with a condition of approval.</i></p> <p>The project proposes integrated seat walls that also serve as planter beds, providing dual-purpose amenity features for the future residences. A recommended condition of approval shall require for all seat wall areas to have integrated wood or other approved seating material for comfort, and for all planter walls to be finished in materials that are consistent with the exterior finishes of the building.</p>

Concept Design Review Conditions of Approval: July 13, 2021	Architect Responses	Staff Analysis:
<p>7. Provide dimensions of the widths and depths of the courtyard openings along Walnut Street to determine whether the proposed design complies with Zoning Code Section 17.50.350.G.3. In addition, provide details of the proposed gates within these openings and a calculation of the percentage of their openness to determine whether they comply with Zoning Code Section 17.50.350.G.6. If a modification to either of these requirements is requested, provide specific reasoning for the Design Commission to consider in its deliberations during Final Design Review.</p>	<p>“The width and height of the building entrances from the street have been carefully proportioned per the overall composition of the building. These openings allow for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Entrance from the street into a zaguan through an opening that is 9'-6" wide with a varying height of 9'-10" to 11'-0". 2) The zaguans leading to the courtyards are 14'-2" wide, 11'-6" high and with a depth of 29'-7". 3) The zaguans open into the courtyards with an opening that is 8' feet wide by 9'10" feet high <p>In summary these two opening provide direct visual connection of the courtyards from the street.</p> <p>The average height of the structure is 39'-0". Per Zoning Code Section 17.50.350.G.3 the minimum opening should be 10'-0" x 19'-6" with an area of 195 SF and with a gate having a minimum 75% transparency. The project provides two openings that are 9'-6" clear wide x 9'-10 to 11'-0" tall with a combined area of 202 SF with a gate that is 80% transparent at each opening. See Sheet A3.00.”</p>	<p><i>This condition has been satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>Per PMC Section 17.50.350.G, the minimum height of the building entrance to the garden shall be 50% of the overall building height, or not more than 25 feet. Additionally, the opening shall be a clear 10 feet wide. These standards can be adjusted through the Design Review process. Staff finds the building entrances to be compatible with the overall architectural design and consistent with the design guidelines.</p>

Concept Design Review Conditions of Approval: July 13, 2021	Architect Responses	Staff Analysis:
8. A tree protection plan prepared by a Certified Arborist shall be incorporated into the plans submitted for Final Design Review and shall include the City of Pasadena Tree Protection Guidelines dated 5/13/19 (see Attachment D), to ensure that the design of the building and parking structure will allow for the protection of tree #793.	"Document has been provided."	<p><i>This condition to be addressed with a condition of approval.</i></p> <p>An arborist report was submitted, providing a tree inventory and a tree protection plan. A recommended condition of approval shall require for the tree protection plan to follow the City's Tree Protection Guidelines and for it to be included into the construction documents and for the fencing and signage components to be installed prior to issuance of a building permit.</p>

Materials & Colors:

The project will utilize a complementary palette of materials including:

- Aluminum-clad windows by Sierra Pacific and French doors in three different colors: Slate Blue, Patina, and Industrial Bronze.
- Thin brick cladding by Tru-brix/Glen-gery. Color specification: Autumn Haze.
- Cement Plaster in a yellow-hued color specification: Gold Buff and Lion's Mane
- Precast concrete wall cap and banding painted in a muted grey: Precipitation.
- Standing seam metal roofing by Berridge. Color specification: Bristol Blue.
- Flat concrete roof tile by Boral Roofing. Color specification: Saxony R 900 Slate Palm Island Green Bump.
- Wall tile by California Pottery. Color specification: Patina and Slate Blue.
- Terra Cotta Tile in like color.
- Exposed wood rafters and trellis to be painted or stained.
- Fiberglass wood doors for the unit entries. Color specification: Patina and Slate Blue.
- Wrought iron balconies, gates, and awnings.
- Glass fiber reinforced concrete panels (GFRC). Color specification: Lion's Mane and Gold Buff.

The project utilizes two architectural paradigms: a brick-clad vernacular at the opposing buildings along Walnut Street to flank the corners, and a Mediterranean-influenced style building in the middle and at the rear of the project site, monolithically clad in the yellow-hued cement plaster. The eastern brick building is proposed to have inset balconies with iron railings, and the western brick building is proposed to have upper floor terraces shaded by standing-seam metal shed roofing, and Juliette balconies at the second floor. The plaster-clad buildings will feature

outdoor terraced balconies at the second and third floors with pergola shade structures and shed roof covered entries with exposed rafters at the ground floor units.

Though the project design has been improved to better reflect the architectural styles of the buildings, staff finds that there are several areas where further refinement of materials and colors are necessary. At the plaster-clad buildings, staff recommends a condition of approval requiring further study of the shed roofing covers and how they integrate with the façade plane and overall architectural style through material, composition, structural supports, and connection to the building walls. The proposed yellow hue of the building, while complementary to the overall material and color palette, is inconsistent with the design guidelines in its application as a bold color, which are recommended to be applied sparingly. Staff recommends a condition requiring reconsideration of this color in an expansive application, and to consider a more muted color hue for large expanses of building facades, or to consider the application of additional colors or materials to break up the façade planes respective to the building forms. The project is also proposing to have accented tile cladding between select window spandrels of the front buildings. However, this detail is not applied consistently, and staff recommends a condition requiring this detailing to be expanded in a consistent manner to all elevations in a rhythmic pattern that is complementary to the façade planes, while adding additional visual interest and architectural detailing, particularly to the plaster-clad buildings. The front plaster-clad building also features a tile wainscot, which appears to be in plane with the upper plaster façade which is inconsistent with the design guidelines as a base material. Staff recommends a condition requiring the tile wainscoting to be removed, or for it to be applied on a furred-out wall plane with an appropriate trim cap and to fully surround the building.

Staff also recommends a condition requiring a parapet roofing detail to be provided and that the parapet be consistent with the proposed architectural style, and overall building materials and composition. Further, staff recommends that the condition also require the parapet at the plaster-clad buildings to be capped with tile, pre-cast concrete, or other approved material with a depth that is within scale for the project, and provides noticeable shadow lines visible from the street.

Staff finds that the public face of the project could be improved to further enhance and activate the street edge through pedestrian-scaled gestures and addressing solid-to-void relationships. Staff therefore – recommends a condition requiring consistency to be applied to all window fenestrations in the façade planes with aligned header and sill heights and to enlarge the small windows along the primary facades, particularly at the Walnut Street elevations, to further activate the street edge and provide more transparency to the project's solid-to-void rhythm. Staff also recommends a condition requiring all projecting balconies to have awnings or shading devices that are compatible to the respective building styles, and provide additional shadow lines and façade activation.

Mechanical Screening:

A roof plan is provided indicating the location of the roof-mounted mechanical equipment which is to be screened by the proposed parapet roofs. However, details of all mechanical ventilation and specifications of drainage systems were not provided. Staff recommends a condition of approval requiring the finish specifications of all drainage systems, such as scuppers and gutters, to be provided, and that they be complementary to the finishes and colors of the respective buildings. Additionally, staff recommends a condition requiring all ventilation systems

to be routed to the roof if possible or, if not, that they be located away from the street-facing and garden-facing facades. If this is also found to be feasible, staff recommends that the applicant be required to provide a thorough analysis on their locations and, that they be fully integrated with the design of the building in terms of location, detailing, material, and color. Finally, staff recommends that all ground vaults be at locations that are not prominently visible.

Landscaping:

The landscape plans indicate proposed hardscaping, planting, and arrangement of outdoor amenities including built in seating. The two primary outdoor spaces include two enclosed, open-to-the sky courtyards.

The western interior courtyard features stamped concrete paving with a top-cast finish, which features small exposed aggregate. A centralized planting bed, with incorporated seat wall, is proposed to be planted with a California Sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*). Border planter beds are proposed to be infilled with a mix of perennials and accent trees including Western Redbuds and Southern Magnolias. The eastern courtyard is proposed to also feature a central planting bed with a 48-inch box *Quercus agrifolia* (Coast Live Oak) and border planters planted with a mix of perennials. A seat wall is also proposed in the eastern courtyard, to border the central planter. Proposed amenities include furnishings of tables and chairs, and a barbeque. The barbeque unit shown is a stand-alone unit, and staff recommends a condition of approval requiring it to be a part of a fully-integrated outdoor cooking area with countertops, wash sink and cabinetry. A dog run is proposed for the far southern boundary, in conjunction with an existing 10-foot wide utility easement, as well as a multi-use area finished in decomposed granite.

The parkway along East Walnut Street is proposed to be planted with a cadence of *Melaleuca* trees, and the parkway along Greenwood Avenue is proposed to be planted with Southern Magnolias in accordance to the conditions of approval issued by the Department of Public Works for the Conditional Use Permit #6846.

Metal gates are proposed for the project at the building entrances. Additional gates are indicated in the landscape plans; however, their design is unclear. As such, staff recommends a condition of approval requiring a fencing and site wall plan to be provided indicating the types and locations of all site fencing, gates and walls along with their design details.

Tree Protection Ordinance:

The applicant proposes to remove seven non-protected trees, and protect in place one protected on-site tree while also retaining the two street trees (*Quercus agrifolia*) along Parkwood Avenue. Tree number no. 793, a protected Senegal Date Palm, is proposed to be protected in place. An arborist report was prepared documenting the health of the tree. A Tree Protection Plan would be incorporated into the construction documents.

Lighting:

The project proposes to incorporate several different types of exterior lighting fixtures with a conical sconce proposed for the unit entries at the ground floor (the ground-floor of the front plaster-clad building is proposed to receive a glass-enclosed sconce), and the upper floor

balconies are proposed to receive a contemporary cylinder wall sconce. Pendant lights are proposed for the zaguan entrances, and step lights are proposed for areas with stairs. All lighting fixtures are proposed to be black or a similar finish. Staff recommends a condition of approval requiring the interior elevations to be depicted with the exterior lighting fixtures by location and type, and for a lighting plan to be provided. The exterior lighting will also be subject to a standard recommended condition requiring lighting temperatures to not exceed 3,000 Kelvin.

Signage:

The applicant is proposing a building identification address sign at the top of the north-face of the tower located above the eastern brick building. The address numerals are proposed to be pin-mounted, and be composed of 30-inch high aluminum channel letters painted a dark bronze. Staff recommends a condition of approval requiring this sign to be non-illuminated and that they not exceed 16 square feet in area, remain below the edge of the roof, and be located a minimum of five feet from the street property line in order to comply with the Zoning Code. Additional signs include way-finding and individual unit entry signs that are not subject to design review.

Comments from Other Departments:

Interdepartmental review was conducted during the Conditional Use Permit process and all conditions of approval from the Hearing Officer approval on April 21, 2021 continue to apply. Staff of the Current Planning Section has verified that the plans submitted for this review are consistent with those submitted for the Conditional Use Permit.

CONCLUSION:

Upon implementation of recommended conditions of approval, the project will comply with the requirements of Final Design Review and the conditions issued at 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:



David M. Reyes
Director of Planning & Community Development
Department

Prepared by:



Edwar Sissi, Planner

Reviewed by:



For Kevin Johnson, Principal Planner

Attachments:

- A. Recommended Conditions of Approval
- B. Project Plans, Renderings, Material Board, and Landscape Plans
- C. Applicant Responses to Concept Design Conditions of Approval
- D. Arborist Report
- E. Arborist Review of Protected Tree #793