



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: APRIL 26, 2022

TO: DESIGN COMMISSION

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

SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR CONCEPT DESIGN REVIEW
NEW EIGHT-STORY, 335,560 SQUARE-FOOT, 375-ROOM HOTEL AT 1347-1365 E. COLORADO BOULEVARD, 35-39 N. HILL AVENUE & 36-56 N. HOLLISTON AVENUE (NORTH PARCEL) &
A FIVE-STORY, 83,029 SQUARE FOOT, MIXED-USE PROJECT WITH 21,539 SQUARE FEET OF COMMERCIAL SPACE & 49 RESIDENTIAL UNITS AT 1336-1350 E. COLORADO BOULEVARD (SOUTH PARCEL)

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Design Commission:

Environmental Determination

Find the application for Concept Design Review was subject to environmental review in the Final Environmental Impact Report certified by the City Council for a previously approved application for establishment of PD-35 for the same project on September 12, 2016, and that there are no changed circumstances or new information which would require further environmental review.

Finding for Compliance with the Tree Protection Ordinance

Acknowledge that there are no private protected trees on the project sites.

Finding for Additional Appurtenance Height

Finds that the proposed additional appurtenance height at the main entry tower element of the north building provides an enhanced architectural design to the building and, therefore, approves the additional height up to 20' over the maximum allowable height of 78.5'.

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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 Colorado Boulevard 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 conditions in Attachment A to be further reviewed during Final Design Review.

BACKGROUND:

On January 25, 2022, the Design Commission, acting under the provisions of §17.61.030 of the Pasadena Municipal Code, reviewed (third review) an application for Concept Design Review for construction of a new eight-story, 335,560 square-foot hotel building with subterranean parking. The scope of work includes the retention of an existing historic building, at the properties located at 1347-1365 E. Colorado Blvd, 35-39 N. Hill Ave. & 36-56 N. Holliston Ave. (“north parcel/building”) and an 83,029 square-foot, 5-story mixed-use building with 21,539 square feet of commercial space and 49 residential units on the property at 1336-1350 E. Colorado Blvd (“south parcel/building”).

The Commission provided comments on the design and continued the public hearing to allow the applicant to revise the design to address the comments provided, including the possibility of meeting with the appointed project subcommittee for progress review prior to presenting the revised project to the full Commission. In responding to the Commission’s design comments, the overall scope of the project has not changed.

Project Overview

- General Plan Designation: Medium Mixed Use (0 – 2.25 FAR, 0 – 87 DU/Acre)
- Zoning: PD-35 (Colorado Hill Planned Development)
- Design Guidelines: The applicable design guidelines are the design-related goals and policies in the Land Use Element of the General Plan, the Design Guidelines in the East Colorado Boulevard Specific Plan and the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-Family Residential Districts.
- Site: The project site consists of five lots totaling 128,328 square feet (2.95 acre) at the northwest corner of E. Colorado Boulevard & N. Hill Avenue, also with frontage on N. Holliston Avenue (“north parcel/building”) and four adjoining lots totaling 30,851 square feet (0.7 acre) at the southeast corner of E. Colorado Boulevard & S. Holliston Avenue (“south parcel/building”). The north parcel is roughly rectangular in shape, with some irregularities and the south parcel is fully rectangular in shape. Both sites are currently developed with one-story automotive sales and repair structures and large surface parking lots. The main showroom building at 1355 E. Colorado Blvd. (1947, Sylvanus Marston) has been deemed a historic resource. The south parcel also has frontage along Giddings Alley along its south

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side. A tree inventory provided with the application identifies one non-protected tree on the north parcel and six street trees along its frontages and two street trees along the frontages of the south parcel.

- Surroundings: Surrounding properties include one- to-two-story commercial, industrial, and institutional buildings and surface parking lots along East Colorado Boulevard and N. Hill Avenue, as well as a newer four-story mixed-use building and surface parking lots along S. Holliston Avenue near the south parcel and one-to-two-story single- and multi-family residential uses along N. Holliston Avenue near the north parcel. Nearby designated historic resources include:
 - Holliston Avenue Methodist Church (1900, John C. Austin & Bennett & Haskell) at 1305 E. Colorado Boulevard
 - Howard Motor Company (1927, Austin Co. of California) at 1283 E. Colorado Boulevard
 - Kindel Building (1928, Bennett & Haskell) at 1095 E. Colorado Boulevard
 - Foothill Boulevard Milestone within the public right-of-way in front of 1304 E. Colorado Boulevard
 - Burns Eastman Building (1926, Glenn Elwood Smith) at 1275 E. Green Street
 - Former gas station and garage buildings (1929, Pacific Steel Building Company) at 1271 E. Green Street
 - Hill Avenue Library (1925, Marston, Van Pelt & Maybury) at 55 S. Hill Avenue
 - Historic Signs at 1155 & 1060 E. Colorado Boulevard
- Project Description: The project involves construction of a new eight-story, 335,560 square-foot hotel building with subterranean parking, including retention of an existing historic building, at the properties located at 1347-1365 E. Colorado Blvd, 35-39 N. Hill Ave. & 36-56 N. Holliston Ave. (“north parcel/building”) and an 83,029 square-foot, 5-story mixed-use building with 21,539 square feet of commercial space and 49 residential units on the property at 1336-1350 E. Colorado Blvd (“south parcel/building”).
- Site Design: At the north parcel, the proposed hotel building would cover the majority of the site, with minimal setbacks from its three street frontages. The building would be chamfered at the corner of Colorado Boulevard and Hill Avenue, creating a forecourt with an elevated terrace flanked by raised planters leading to a loggia and one of the hotel’s pedestrian entries. A second hotel entrance along Hill Avenue would be deeply recessed within the building. A shallow covered loggia is proposed at the northernmost building edge along Hill Avenue. Along Colorado Boulevard, the building has no setback except for recessed entrances to retail spaces and the chamfered corner previously described. The main vehicular entry court and drop-off zone is proposed approximately mid-block along Colorado Boulevard, adjacent to the historic building to be retained. The building has a five-foot setback along Holliston Avenue and a varying setback from the north property line. This setback area provides an additional vehicular access and drop-off zone as well as loading space, a ramp to the subterranean parking garage and trash/recycling space.

Similarly, at the south parcel, the building is also proposed to cover the majority of the property with minimal setbacks. Covered loggias are proposed at the northwest and southwest corners of the building and a shallow setback is proposed at the northeast corner

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at the lobby entrance. Vehicular access to the subterranean parking structure is proposed to be taken from Giddings Alley at the southeast corner of the site, with loading and service spaces adjacent to the west.

- Architectural Style: Contemporary with references to Art Deco (north parcel) and Art Deco Mediterranean (south parcel)
- Developer: J & K Plus Investments, LLC (Jason Chen)
- Architect: ACRM Architects + Interiors & Goodale Architecture Planning
- Landscape Architect: L.A. Group Design Works

ANALYSIS:

Design Commission Comments from January 25, 2022 Concept Design Review Hearing

On January 25, 2022, the Design Commission reviewed an application for Concept Design Review for this project. The Commission continued the public hearing to give the applicant an opportunity to respond to the comments below (the architect’s and staff’s responses are detailed in the chart below and the full revised plans and elevations are in Attachment A). Note that on February 28, 2022, the applicant also presented the revised drawings to the subcommittee of the Design Commission that was appointed for this project, which was generally supportive of the revised design, and has made some refinements since that review.

Commission Comment, January 25, 2022	Excerpts from Architect’s Response	Staff Comments
<i>Both buildings</i> 1. Separate the review of the two buildings.	“This is at the pleasure of the Commission.”	The application submitted is responsive to the allowable development project under PD-35 and may be reviewed as a single application. To better assist the Commission in its review of the overall project, separate presentations of the two buildings will be provided at the April 26, 2022 public hearing.
2. Develop a contextual consistency between the two sites beyond surface materiality.	[see extended response narrative in Attachment A]	<i>Comment satisfactorily addressed.</i> The design team has developed a program for achieving consistency between the two sides and has provided a clearly articulated rationale narrative to support the revised design. Staff finds that the two buildings are now more clearly related in their architectural features, while retaining distinct character in response to their differentiated

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Commission Comment, January 25, 2022	Excerpts from Architect's Response	Staff Comments
		programming and the original design concepts approved for them in the PD.
<p>3. Demonstrate a consistent, very clear architectural vocabulary for the buildings, ensuring they are not a mix of architectural styles/concepts. Provide a methodology that explores and clearly articulates the contextuality of the buildings and that develops a vocabulary that is used consistently.</p>	<p>[see extended response narrative in Attachment A]</p>	<p><i>Comment to be addressed with a condition of approval.</i></p> <p>The narrative and revised plans provided by the design team presents a clear and consistent architectural vocabulary for each of the two buildings and demonstrates their contextuality. Staff finds that the areas above the east entrance to the north building (floors 4-7) and over the west entrance (floors 6-7) break from the architectural vocabulary of the rest of the building in terms of fenestration and general architectural treatment and recommends a condition requiring additional study of these areas to ensure consistency with the overall architectural vocabulary established for the building, in conjunction with enhancements that recognize the significance of the entry locations.</p>
<p>4. Demonstrate a consistent fenestration rationale in context with the proposed design style.</p>	<p>"...tall casement windows are proposed from a knee-high sill to bottom of slab. The decidedly vertical energies of the fenestration supports Deco expression without need for dividing window lites; and maximizes the daylighting into the conventionally long, deep hotel rooms. The size and proportions of the basic window unit is relatively standardized throughout."</p>	<p><i>Comment to be addressed with a condition of approval.</i></p> <p>The design team has provided a clear rationale for the fenestration, which is applied in a largely consistent manner throughout the project. As noted above, staff finds that the fenestration of floors 4-7 above the east entry and floors 6-7 above the west entry to the north building are inconsistent with the overall fenestration patterning at accentuated entrance locations of the building and should be further studied for review during Final Design Review.</p>
<p>5. Demonstrate a consistent rationale for proposed balconies in context with proposed design style, building</p>	<p>"...we have taken an approach that offers a wide variety of room and unit variations - no balconies, French balconies, full balconies, bay windows - employing French</p>	<p><i>Comment satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>The use of balconies has also been rationalized throughout the project. The hotel building largely has Juliet balconies and roof decks in areas where the building massing steps</p>

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<p>program and usability of the balconies.</p>	<p>balconies and 3-story bay windows with particular intensity along Colorado Boulevard...</p> <p>The modern bay window was used as early as 1890 by the Burnham and Root firm in the proto-Deco Reliance Building... It is fitting to deploy such a device in relation to the City's main boulevard, which is only beginning to fulfill the Master Plan's century-old vision of dense, urban maturity. Characteristic of an approach informed by Art Deco, we have also not hesitated to place these balconies and bays where they serve to strengthen the visual composition of the style.</p>	<p>back, with recessed balconies at the south tower element.</p> <p>The south building has roof terraces, projecting balconies and Juliet balconies that are arranged in a logical pattern on all elevations.</p> <p>Staff finds that the use of balconies has been employed in a consistent, logical manner throughout the project and that the types of balconies used on the two buildings appropriately relate to the uses and styles of the buildings.</p>
<p>6. Present exhibits to demonstrate how the diverse components of the buildings work as a whole to reinforce the overall design concept, logic and style.</p>	<p>[see extended response narrative in Attachment A]</p>	<p><i>Comment satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>The design team has provided an extensive narrative and diagrams to illustrate how the buildings have been designed to reinforce the overall design concept. Staff finds that the overall design concept has significantly improved and is clearly presented throughout.</p>
<p>7. Show examples of the design evolution of the project, including comparison imagery of the current design with the original design of the PD initial design intent.</p>	<p>[see extended response narrative in Attachment A]</p> <p>"...The comparison of architectural approach has been conceptually addressed in the first seven pages of the narrative, comparing imagery of the initial classically-inclined ziggeraut Deco to its evolution into a lighter, more vertical and decorative commercial Deco style. The series on this page compares the Moule & Polyzoïdes Planning</p>	<p><i>Comment satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>The design team has provided an explanation and imagery depicting the evolution of the design from the PD approval concept to the current design and have demonstrated that the current design is a logical progression of the development of the original concept. Staff agrees with this assessment.</p>

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	<p>Commission Submittal rendered views to similar views of the present design. Respectively, from top to bottom, the views are of the hotel arrival court, the hotel southeast corner, and portions of the eastern facade.”</p>	
<p>8. Share precedent images that are driving the design intent / inspiration and that define the hospitality approach to the hotel design.</p>	<p>“Local and regional prototypes of the Art Deco style in architecture are shared in the opening pages of these responses. As noted there, we find that a vigorously vertical, materially-enhanced Art Deco style is more fitting for hospitality than the stripped, classic, ziggeraut Deco represented by the early development of the PD exhibits. On this page, we primarily show images that relate to project details and materials - with a focus on increasing the hospitality aspect of the project through the introduction of ‘high-style’ Deco elements.”</p>	<p><i>Comment satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>The design team has provided imagery of the design inspiration that has informed the current design intent for the hotel. Staff finds that the imagery provided is a clear representation of the design intent of the two buildings and that the revised designs strongly relate to the inspiration provided.</p>
<p>9. Reconcile the plans and elevations.</p>	<p>“Addressed in updated drawing package.”</p>	<p><i>Comment satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>Staff has closely reviewed the submitted drawings and has determined that the plans and elevations are fully consistent with each other.</p>
<p>10. Demonstrate excellence of materiality — stress this more in the submittal package and provide a preview of the overall materiality approach. In particular, EIFS should not be used.</p>	<p>“Addressed in blow-up elevation notes and on previous page.”</p>	<p><i>Comment satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>The design team has provided a conceptual materials palette in the elevations as well as a detailed narrative and imagery of the proposed materiality in the response to comments narrative. On the north building, conceptual materials include plaster walls with a stone base, GFRC columns and pilasters, teardrop-shaped shingles and glazed terra cotta wall panels, terra cotta</p>

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		<p>parapet patterning, zinc panels, metal balcony railings and pergolas, aluminum storefronts, and casement windows and French doors.</p> <p>On the south building the proposed materials palette is largely the same as is proposed for the north building, except that the shingled and terra cotta wall panels and pergolas are eliminated. Zinc-clad weather canopies are proposed as well.</p> <p>Subject to more detailed review during Final Design Review, staff finds that the conceptual materials palette for both building is high quality and responsive to each of the architectural styles proposed.</p>
<p>11. Provide studies that include detailed large-scale elevation displays, 3-D modeling and cross sections to demonstrate high quality in the articulation of the building massing from the ground to the parapet at strategic locations on the buildings.</p>	<p>“Addressed in narrative blow-ups. Additional blow-ups with sections provided in revised drawing set.”</p>	<p><i>Comment satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>The design team has provided extensive imagery and exhibits to demonstrate the high quality building massing articulation proposed. Staff finds that the current massing presentation is high quality and consistent with the conceptual design approved in conjunction with the PD.</p>
<p><i>North building comments</i></p> <p>1. The vehicular entry sequence to the hotel needs further refinement to make it more elegant and more complementary to the historic building and courtyard, including an entrance threshold. Further study the southeast corner windows of the historic auto showroom building to</p>	<p>“The entry sequence has been revised to provide a narrower entry drive with richer landscape flanking the drive and the entry walk. A continuous arcade to the entry along the flank of the motor court has been added. The ramp to parking has been moved away from the historic building. The hotel itself has been moved north and away from the historic building, providing a clear-to-sky entry path from arrival court to the interior court north of the historic building.”</p>	<p><i>Comment to be addressed with a condition of approval.</i></p> <p>The vehicular entry sequence has been revised consistent with the Commission’s comments and the applicant’s statements at the previous hearing to relocate the ramp to the parking structure closer to the main hotel building. This will provide improved opportunity for the courtyard space behind the historic building and a location of the historic light fixture to remain publicly visible at the end of the historic building breezeway. The plans are unclear as to the southeast corner windows</p>

Commission Comment, January 25, 2022	Excerpts from Architect's Response	Staff Comments
<p>create a more inviting appearance at the main vehicular entry to the hotel in a manner that is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Relocation of the ramp to the subterranean garage as described by the applicant is encouraged.</p>		<p>of the historic building; however, a Historic Architect has recently been engaged to assist with development of rehabilitation plans for the historic building. Given that the majority of the Commission's design concerns with the building appear to have been addressed, staff recommends that the consideration of providing additional windows at the southeast corner of the historic building be a condition of approval for review during Final Design Review.</p>
<p>2. Further study the massing of the main southeast corner of the building, as well as the similar smaller volume at the northeast corner, to lighten the massing and emphasize verticality rather than horizontality. In particular, the continuous horizontal volume at the second and third floors at the southeast corner volume should be broken up and the corner tower element further emphasized.</p>	<p>"Addressed in narrative and revised drawing package."</p>	<p><i>Comment satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>Staff finds that the massing of the southeast corner is greatly improved in the revised design, including the emphasis on verticality, and the fenestration is consistent with other important entry volumes of the building, provides a lightness to the massing and reflects its important street corner location.</p>
<p>3. Further study the roof cap element at the volume east of the main vehicular entry to better integrate it into the design or eliminate it to improve the logic of this volume with similarly designed volumes elsewhere on the building, which do not include this feature.</p>	<p>"Addressed. Massing simplified."</p>	<p><i>Comment satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>The roof cap element has been eliminated and the design of this volume has been made consistent with the overall hierarchy of the building design.</p>

Commission Comment, January 25, 2022	Excerpts from Architect's Response	Staff Comments
<p>4. Further study the articulation of the top of the main central tower on the south elevation to ensure this feature is as prominent as possible in the design. If additional height is allowed at this location, consider increasing the height of the central portion of the tower to further increase its prominence.</p>	<p>“Addressed to the maximum of 96 feet.”</p>	<p><i>Comment satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>The design team has provided a crown element to the tower that reaches 96 feet and has enhanced materiality to reflect the importance of its location. The height of the tower appurtenance requires special consideration by the Design Commission pursuant to Zoning Code Section 17.40.060, which allows appurtenance heights up to 20' above the allowable height limit if the additional height provides an improved architectural design (otherwise, 15' is allowed by right). Staff finds that the increased height at this location provides an enhanced architectural design to the building by ensuring the entry tower element is a prominent feature, as well as articulation of the building roofline and recommends that the Commission approve the increased appurtenance height. It should be noted that the height could be increased up to 98.5' and staff recommends a condition of approval requiring the design team to consider whether an additional 2.5' of height at this location would further enhance the design.</p>
<p>5. Further study additional buffering landscaping along the north side of the north property.</p>	<p>“Additional landscape buffer has been provided.”</p>	<p><i>Comment satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>The landscape plan for the north building depicts a strip of landscaping along the entire north property line, as well as landscaped areas along the north edge of the building and in other areas near the vehicular drop-off at that location. Subject to review of final landscape plans during Final Design Review, staff finds that the additional landscaped areas provided are sufficient to buffer the service areas of the project from adjacent uses.</p>

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<p>6. Include resolution of the historic preservation approach to the incorporation of the historic building. Engage a qualified Historic Architect to identify rehabilitation treatments to be implemented in conjunction with the proposed project, including the building and contributing light fixture.</p>	<p>"An historic architect is currently consulting and is in the process of proposing for continuous services on the project, (Heritage Architecture, San Diego). The historic building's original form, glazing and mullions will be retained, and it will read as a simple, white Modernist form in complement to the hotel project. The later addition of the awnings will be removed. While the Ford Blue paint may arguably contribute to historical character, it equally can be seen as branding overlay, (one that is still quite extant in the culture). The color is a garish, and, in this team's opinion, lends little value to the original character of the Modernist architecture."</p>	<p><i>Comment to be addressed with a condition of approval.</i></p> <p>The design team has engaged with qualified Historic Architect Heritage Architecture & Planning for the project. The Historic Architect has not yet conducted a full analysis of the historic building; therefore, consistent with the requirements of the Mitigation Monitoring & Reporting Program for the project, staff recommends a condition of approval requiring this to be provided for review during Final Design Review.</p>
<p><i>South building comments:</i> 7. Further define the design of the pergola features.</p>	<p>"Omitted for tower feature."</p>	<p><i>Comment satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>Pergolas have been eliminated from the proposed design.</p>
<p>8. Further articulate the wall at the north end of the east elevation with openings or other treatments or landscape to avoid publicly visible blank wall conditions. Consider arched recesses in the stucco finish that respond to the arches along the street elevations.</p>	<p>"Addressed with prismatic tower form and revealed central window slot."</p>	<p><i>Comment to be addressed with a condition of approval.</i></p> <p>This area has been improved with articulation the corresponds to the rhythm of pilasters along the street facades and a vertical recess to allow for a stack of windows. While these treatments are an improvement, further study of the materiality and treatment of the blank façade areas should be conducted to ensure it is consistent with the design treatment of other publicly visible elevations on the building. Staff has recommended a condition of approval to this effect.</p>
<p>9. Define a high-quality, durable base material other than stucco.</p>	<p>"Addressed: stone."</p>	<p><i>Comment satisfactorily addressed.</i></p>

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		Staff finds that the proposed stone wainscot satisfactorily addresses this comment.
10. Ensure that the landscape plans are coordinated with the elevations and renderings provided.	"Addressed in revised drawing package."	<i>Comment to be addressed with a condition of approval.</i> The renderings provided largely reflect the landscaping shown in the provided landscape plans; however, there are plantings shown in the renderings along the north elevation near the leasing office that are not shown in the landscape plans. As such, staff recommends that this comment be a condition of approval.

Previous Staff-Recommended Conditions

The majority of staff's previously recommended conditions have been discussed in the table above and have been modified to reflect the current design. For the north building, previously recommended conditions related to the historic building are retained in this report as these issues were not of primary concern during the previous reviews and can be easily addressed during Final Design Review. As such, staff recommends that they be retained to ensure they are addressed going forward. The previous staff report also included project conditions regarding Zoning/PD compliance and removal of public trees; those conditions will continue to be applicable for the revised plans.

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CONCLUSION:

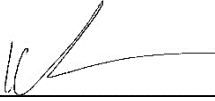
The issues identified at the previous hearing have largely been addressed in the revised plans and written responses provided. Staff recommends that the Commission approve the application for Concept Design Review with conditions in Attachment A.

Respectfully submitted,



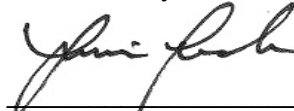
David M. Reyes
Director of Planning and
Community Development

Prepared by:



Kevin Johnson
Principal Planner

Reviewed by:



Luis Rocha
Planning Manager

Attachments:

- A. Recommended conditions of approval
- B. Design team responses to previous comments
- C. Current plans and elevations – north building
- D. Current plans and elevations – south building
- E. Staff report from January 25, 2022 Design Commission meeting (without attachments)