



## PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

### STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** AUGUST 23, 2022

**TO:** DESIGN COMMISSION

**FROM:** JENNIFER PAIGE, AICP ACTING DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

**SUBJECT:** APPLICATION FOR CONCEPT DESIGN REVIEW FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION OF A SIX-STORY, WITH-MEZANNINE, 93,355-SQUARE-FOOT MIXED-USE BUILDING WITH 11,617 SQUARE FEET OF COMMERCIAL SPACE INCLUDING FOUR WORK/LIVE UNITS AND 84 RESIDENTIAL UNITS AT 86 SOUTH FAIR OAKS AVENUE – CENTRAL PARK APARTMENTS

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#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Design Commission:

#### **Environmental Determination**

Affirm that the application for Concept Design Review was subject to environmental review in the Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment approved by the City Council for the same project on April 11, 2022, and that there are no changed circumstances or new information which would require further environmental review.

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

1. Acknowledge that a tree inventory (Attachment B) identifies removal of three protected specimen trees and relocation of three protected specimen trees.
2. Find that the removal of three protected specimen trees and relocation of three protected specimen trees meets finding 6 of the Tree Protection Ordinance (PMC Section 8.52.075.A): *“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 three protected trees and relocation of three protected trees.

**Findings for the Approval of Height Limit Exception through Height Averaging**

1. Find that the height limits documented in the height averaging exhibit comply with the regulatory provisions in the Zoning Code (§17.30.050). These provisions limit an increase in height (to 90 feet in this case) over a maximum of 30% of the building footprint if the additional height is counterbalanced by lower heights elsewhere on a development site such that the average height does not exceed the otherwise required maximum building height (75 feet in this case).
2. Find that the request for additional height complies with the following findings for height averaging:
  - a. The additional height provides for a more sensitive transition to an adjacent historic structure and provides for a more interesting skyline;
  - b. The additional height will not be injurious to adjacent properties or uses, or detrimental to environmental quality, quality of life, or the health, safety, and welfare of the public;
  - c. The additional height will promote a superior design solution that enhances the property and its surroundings, without detrimental impacts on views and sight lines; and
  - d. The additional height is consistent with the objectives and policies of the Central District Specific Plan and the General Plan; and
3. Based on these findings, approve the request for height averaging.

**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 Central District Specific Plan and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation; and
2. Based on these findings, approve the application for Concept Design Review subject to the conditions in Attachment A, which shall be further reviewed during Final Design Review.

**BACKGROUND:**

On May 24, 2022, the Design Commission reviewed the application for Concept Design Review. The Commission provided comments on the design and continued the public hearing to allow the applicant an opportunity to revise the design to address the comments provided. In responding to the Commission's design comments, the overall scope of the project has not changed, but refinements to various design components were addressed and are discussed in the Analysis section.

## Project Overview

- General Plan Designation: High Mixed Use (0.0 – 3.0 FAR; 0-87 DU/acre)
- Zoning: CD-1 (Central District Specific Plan, Old Pasadena Subdistrict)
- 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 Central District Specific Plan and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- Site: The .74-acre site is comprised of a roughly rectangular lot at the northeast corner of Fair Oaks Avenue and Dayton Street and is currently used as surface parking lot serving the Green Hotel Apartments building, with ancillary passive recreation space, and contains an outdoor advertising sign. Immediately to the east of the site is the Castle Green. There are 20 trees on the project site, seven of which are protected, as well as eight public street trees along the property's street frontages and six off-site private trees in close proximity to the project site, one of which is protected.
- Surroundings: Surrounding properties include three- to-seven-story commercial and mixed-use buildings, including the seven-story Castle Green and six-story Green Hotel Apartments. Immediately across the street to the west of the project site is a three-story mixed-use building and a parking lot and across Dayton Street to the south of the project site is Central Park. The property is within the boundaries of the Old Pasadena Historic District as well as the Hotel Green individual historical property, both listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Project Description: The project includes construction of a new six-story plus mezzanine, approximately 93,355-square-foot mixed-use building. The proposed mix of uses would include 11,617 square feet of ground-floor commercial space (4,218 square feet of retail space, 5,425 square feet for four work/live units and 1,974 square feet of restaurant space) and 84 residential units in the remaining floors above the ground floor. Retail and restaurant space is proposed to be located along the western edge of the site along South Fair Oaks Avenue and the work/live units are proposed to be located along Dayton Street. Vehicular access is proposed at the southeast corner of the site from Dayton Street. The project will include eight affordable housing units for very low income households, six affordable housing units for moderate income households, and a 35% density bonus. One concession is being requested, by utilizing the City's Affordable Housing Concession Menu, for a reduction in the number of off-street automobile parking space requirements by up to 50% below otherwise applicable standards. The number of parking spaces proposed is 159; where the required minimum number of parking spaces is 193, an approximately 17% reduction.
- Trees: A total of 16 private trees are proposed to be removed, three of which are protected under the City's Tree Protection Ordinance. Three private protected trees (all Palm trees) are also proposed to be relocated on-site. One protected public street tree will be relocated onto the project site. One on-site protected tree is proposed to be retained in conjunction with the project.

- Site Design: The new building proposed for the site would have a roughly L-shaped plan and house six stories with ground floor retail, residential amenities, and work/live spaces on the lower level. The remaining five floors above would contain a mix of one- and two-bedroom residential units. The proposal also includes three levels of subterranean parking accessed by a driveway on Dayton Street at the eastern end of the frontage. No setbacks are proposed along Fair Oaks Avenue or Dayton Street. However, the building is proposed to be set back approximately 10 feet from the north property line adjacent to the Green Hotel Apartments and approximately 30 feet from the west property line adjacent to the Castle Green. Landscaping, pedestrian walkways, and a pool and spa are proposed in a ground-level open space area at the northeast portion of the site, as well as a landscaped strip and pathway extending south from the open space area to Dayton Street along the eastern property line.
- Architectural Style: Contemporary with references to Moorish features drawn from the Castle Green and Green Hotel Apartments
- Developer: Green Hotel Apartments, L.P.
- Architects: Architectural Resources Group
- Landscape Architect: Not specified

## **ANALYSIS:**

### **Recommended Conditions of Approval**

At the May 24, 2022 Design Commission Hearing, Staff recommended approval of the proposed project subject to ten conditions of approval. The revised proposal has addressed some of the previously recommended conditions of approval. Below is a disposition of each of the previously proposed conditions:

1. The overall articulation and detailing of the proposed building shall be further refined and simplified to ensure it presents as a modern or contemporary development, while maintaining a compatible relationship to the surrounding historic context. Creation of a false sense of historical development shall be avoided.

*Condition Satisfied. The revised proposal has included a number of additional details related to materials and construction techniques that illustrate the modernity of the proposed new construction while maintaining a visual relationship to the surrounding historic resources through subtle application of referential features.*

2. The west facade of the southwest corner tower fronting S. Fair Oaks Avenue shall be further enhanced and articulated to be consistent with and a continuation of the decorative features seen on the main west and east facades.

*Condition Satisfied. The southwest corner tower, fronting S. Fair Oaks Avenue, has been revised to include a cast stone design between all pairs of windows at the west elevation and at the balconies located at the south elevation. The design of these cast stone details draws from an updated design of similar details found throughout the rest of the building.*

3. The fenestration patterns on the west facade of the southwest corner tower shall be further refined to provide depth and dimension that is consistent with fenestration found elsewhere on the building. In particular, the awnings over the windows at these locations shall be modified to provide additional separation for texture and dimension, which can be accomplished by separating the awnings (one per window) or, alternatively, providing a spandrel or additional window in between the current windows shown to create a larger, single, multi-light opening.

*Still Applicable as condition no. 1 in Attachment A.*

4. The composition of the massing along Dayton Street shall be further refined to create a continuation of the articulation seen on other facades of the building. This includes exploring modifications to the metal arched arcade at the second floor and roof terrace above so that it maintains a smooth transition from the immediately adjacent or abutting facades and has a more integrated termination at the roof plane.

*Still Applicable as condition no. 2 in Attachment A.*

5. The locations of the stair towers at the east side shall be further studied to incorporate them into the main building volume to the west. Alternatively, the stair towers shall be redesigned to be integrated, subordinate structures in comparison to the main volume.

*Still Applicable as condition no. 3 in Attachment A.*

6. 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. The tree, which will be protected, is on-site tree number 38 as shown in the submitted plans. Protection measures shall also be installed on the project site for off-site tree number OS35.

*Still Applicable as condition no. 4 in Attachment A.*

7. The proposal to relocate an existing street tree is subject to separate review by the Urban Forestry Advisory Committee and approval by the City Manager prior to Final Design Review. If the request is not approved, and changes to the approved concept design are required to accommodate the existing trees, an application for Changes to an Approved Project will be required to be reviewed prior to submittal of an application for Final Design Review.

*Still Applicable as condition no. 5 in Attachment A.*

8. As required in PMC §8.52.077, the applicant shall post a performance bond (or alternate security provided in a form acceptable to the director of finance) in an amount equal to 100% of the appraised value of the tree proposed to be relocated, calculated using the most recent edition of the Guide for Plant Appraisal published by the International Society of Arboriculture to ensure that the relocated tree is properly established and maintained for three years. Evidence of compliance with this condition shall be submitted to staff for review and approval prior to issuance of a building permit.

*Still Applicable as condition no. 6 in Attachment A.*

9. Depict on the landscape plan areas of natural soil on the site and, to the greatest extent feasible, those trees required to be planted as replacement trees according to the adopted Tree Replacement Matrix, and the protected trees proposed to be relocated on-site, shall be planted within areas of natural soil.

*Still Applicable as condition no. 7 in Attachment A.*

10. Provide additional details of the driveway/ramp configuration as viewed from the street and ensure that the driveway is softened as much as possible with specialty materials and landscaping.

*Still Applicable as condition no. 8 in Attachment A.*

The updated list of recommended conditions of approval, based on the revised proposal, is provided in Attachment A.

### **Design Commission Comments from May 24, 2022 Concept Design Review Hearing**

The Design Commission’s comments from the May 24, 2022 Concept Design Review, along with responses from the design team and staff, are detailed in the chart below. The applicant’s full written and graphic responses, along with the full revised plans and elevations, are in Attachment C, starting on page 39.

<b>Commission Comment, May 24, 2022</b>	<b>Excerpts from Design Team Response</b>	<b>Staff Comments</b>
1. Study the driveway location and size off of Dayton Street and explore alternatives that incorporate it into the building to allow for a larger garden or courtyard area.	“The current design places the parking garage and loading access in a discreet location that is not readily visible from the public right of way or Central Park. ARG has studied the possibility of relocating the proposed driveway access and location on the Dayton Street façade... the current proposed access is the most respectful approach to the surrounding public realm, the historic character of the site, and the connection to Central Park. The current design also maximizes the size of the Project’s courtyard area.”	<i>Comment to be addressed with new condition of approval no. 8.</i>  The applicant team has conducted studies that explore various alternatives for relocating the driveway on Dayton Street to incorporate it into the building. The studies resulted in a finding that the originally proposed location of the driveway on Dayton Street is the most appropriate location. Staff agrees that, in this unique situation, providing an open-air driveway, softened with landscaping and specialty paving, as recommended in condition of approval no. 8, is an appropriate approach to maintain the greatest possible open area between the new building and the adjacent Castle Green to the east. This

Commission Comment, May 24, 2022	Excerpts from Design Team Response	Staff Comments
		can be addressed during Final Design Review.
<p>2. Study the design further and explore ways to refine the proposed building to reflect a present day development while maintaining a strong connection to the historical context of the immediately adjacent historic resources.</p>	<p>“The watercolor renderings show the overall compatibility of the new building’s architectural details and materials with its surroundings. At a finer scale, the new building will quietly but clearly express its contemporary construction. To reinforce this, ARG has studied and explored the building design to reflect a present day development while maintaining a strong connection to the site’s historical context. ARG proposes... refinements to the building’s design features and for additional context, we have also included information on the proposed materials and elements...”</p>	<p><i>Comment has been satisfactorily addressed.</i></p> <p>The applicant team has revised the plans for Concept Design Review and has provided additional information regarding the materiality of the new construction and further methods for refinement and simplification of design details by which the design of the new construction will be further differentiated from the historic resources surrounding it. The level of details provided in the revised plans has illustrated that the new construction will maintain a generally modern appearance in the application of modern materials and construction methods while including subtle compatible references to the surrounding historic resources. As such, staff’s previous concerns regarding differentiation of the design have been addressed and the previously recommended condition of approval no. 1 has been removed from the current recommended conditions in Attachment A. Staff and the Design Commission will review the details and specifications that the applicant will be required to provide during Final Design Review to further confirm that the project will be differentiated as a modern development.</p>

**ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

On April 11, 2022, the City Council adopted a Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment (SCEA) for the project. Since the adoption of the SCEA, there have been no changes to the project scope that would require additional environmental review; therefore, staff recommends that the Commission affirm that the application for Concept Design Review was subject to environmental review in the SCEA approved by the City Council for the same project, and that there are no changed circumstances or new information which would require further environmental review.

**CONCLUSION:**

The revised project design has satisfactorily addressed the comments provided during the previous Concept Design Review hearing and, upon implementation of the recommended conditions of approval, will be consistent with the design guidelines in the Central District Specific Plan and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Staff recommends approval of the application for Concept Design Review for the project with conditions included in Attachment A.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Attachments:

- A. Recommended conditions of approval
- B. Tree inventory and exhibit; Private Tree Removal Applications
- C. Applicant's graphic and narrative responses to previous Design Commission Comments including updated plans and elevations
- D. Staff report from May 24, 2022 Design Commission meeting (without attachments)