



**MEETING MINUTES  
SPECIAL MEETING  
DESIGN COMMISSION  
Tuesday, October 11, 2022**

**SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING AT 4:30 P.M.  
Virtual Meeting**

**FOR A COMPLETE AND DETAILED RECAP OF THE MEETING, PLEASE VISIT:**  
<https://www.cityofpasadena.net/commissions/audio-video-recordings/>

**1. ROLL CALL- COMMISSIONER RAO CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 4:30PM**

Present: Commissioners Toro (arrived late), Rao, Litwin, Delgado, Chiao, and Carpenter

Absent: Commissioner Sepulveda (Excused)

Staff: Kevin Johnson and Rathar Duong

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion to approve **September 13, 2022** minutes was moved and second by Commissioners Delgado and Litwin; Commissioner Rao abstained; Commissioner Sepulveda was absent; no opposition, the minutes were approved.

**3. PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION**

**A. 1999 E. COLORADO BLVD (COUNCIL DISTRICT 2)**

Construction of a new 3- and 4-story mixed-used building consisting of 73 residential dwelling units, 5,143 square feet of ground floor commercial space, and 79 at-grade parking spaces.

(Case Planner: Rathar Duong)

Applicant/Architect: Alexander Catala

Owner: Paul P. Rusnak

Public Comments: None

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### Commission Comments:

- Historic Resource Evaluations will be required for the proposed demolition of the existing single-family residences that are 45 years or older.
- The site plan and arrangement of the ground floor spaces should be further studied to facilitate the activation of the street, sidewalk and public realm. To that end, consider relocating the driveway along Berkeley Avenue further north to achieve an uninterrupted, continuous, safe and protected pedestrian realm along the sidewalk and improve traffic circulation. Extend the retail frontage to continue along Berkeley Avenue or introduce residential units on the ground floor similar to the units fronting N. San Marino Avenue. The residents' gym at the northern edge of the site along N. San Marino is oddly placed and appears disconnected as is the mechanical room next to the lobby. A gym is an active use that can help enliven the E. Colorado Blvd frontage and/or the corner. Consider relocating the mail, bicycle and MEP rooms further north of the site or integrate them into the parking garage.
- The surface ground floor parking garage occupies a substantial footprint and limits the full exploration of design potential for the site. Consistent with a project of this scale, consider locating the parking in an underground subterranean level. This alternative would permit alternative site planning and additional design flexibility throughout the site. For example, it would create an opportunity for a ground floor open space with public amenities, such as a central courtyard/landscape design that can open to and connect with the street similar to the third floor roof patio, in addition to engaging with the proposed ground-level residential units.
  - If full or partial subterranean parking levels are not possible, consider a half or split level parking garage.
- Study how the proposal maintains a view corridor north to the San Gabriel Mountains from all outdoor spaces, especially common outdoor areas.
- Consider incorporating public open space on the ground floor as in a courtyard that is designed as an extension of the sidewalk and streetscape.
- Ensure that the overall architectural concept is grounded in established design precedents. All components of the building, such as building volume, mass, scale, design features and treatments, and detailing should support a cohesive and quality design throughout the development and should be compatible with the existing and surrounding context. In general, study the overall composition of the building and consider how different features relate to each other into a collective whole and strengthens the design. Introduce greater variation in the facades at the ground and upper floors. Carefully consider how the ground floor transitions to the upper levels whether through design detail or material application, or both. Restudy the roofline, including a roof parapet that creates variation while also assists in screening rooftop equipment.
- The design treatment of the two corners where the streets intersect should be carefully considered as focal points of the building and/or points of entry. Both corners should be highlighted to become more prominent or architecturally differentiated, but welcoming and should continue to maintain design

consistency with the rest of the building, while looking for opportunities to define the corners. All entrances should be articulated and orient toward the street or open spaces for a seamless transition between private and public realms. The chamfered southwest corner appears unresolved. Restudy its form and treatment to achieve an integrated design with the building as a whole.

- All courtyards and common open spaces should be of sufficient size to accommodate residents and visitors. Each outdoor space should be designed with a variety of landscape features and amenities and be programmed for active uses, relaxation and socialization. Some smaller, but usable spaces may be acceptable in conjunction with larger areas. These outdoor spaces should avoid being pass-through spaces.
- Carefully consider how materials are utilized and where they are applied to strengthen the building design and cohesion across all elevations. For example, corrugated metal is only used on the southeast corner. Consider eliminating this material from the design, as it has proven to be poor quality and incompatible with the City's existing fabric.
- Consider how the building's north elevation sensitively transitions to the lower scale residential buildings to the north of the project site.
- The ground floor should be carefully designed to achieve a pedestrian scale, create transparency into and out of the building and contribute to an activated street front.
- Consider overall signage design and particularly the location of signs and how they can be incorporated into the building design.
- Murals should not be incorporated in lieu of meaningful and high quality design treatment of a wall or façade. However, murals that are thoughtfully designed and detailed to complement the architecture of the building can become appropriate features and focal points of the building.
- Provide entry stoops directly from the sidewalk for the ground floor residential units along street frontages.
- The Colorado Boulevard elevation and its architectural design/treatment should reflect the commercial character of the Boulevard; while the elevations facing the side streets should possess a more residential feel, scale and character that is a continuation of the design sensibility reflected in the existing residential buildings to the north of the project site. Since each site is facing three street frontages, the design approach should consider the project as three separate buildings. Consider walk-up and two-story (townhouse) units with direct access from the street, deeper front setback and elevated landscape design.
- The location of the dog park should be reconsidered and relocated to a centralized location within the project site away from the existing and adjoining residential buildings to the north.

**B. 2025 E. COLORADO BLVD (COUNCIL DISTRICT 2)**

Construction of a new 3- and 4-story mixed-use building consisting of 77 residential dwelling units, 4,500 square feet of ground floor commercial space, and 77 at-grade parking spaces.

(Case Planner: Rathar Duong)

Applicant/Architect: Alexander Catala

Owner: Paul P. Rusnak

Public Comments: None

Commission Comments:

- The site plan and arrangement of the ground floor spaces should be further studied to facilitate the activation of the street, sidewalk and public realm. To that end, consider relocating the driveway along Berkeley Avenue further north to achieve an uninterrupted, continuous, safe and protected pedestrian realm along the sidewalk and improve traffic circulation. Extend the retail frontage to continue along Berkeley Avenue or introduce residential units on the ground floor similar to the units fronting N. San Marino Avenue. The residents' gym at the northern edge of the site along N. San Marino is oddly placed and appears disconnected as is the mechanical room next to the lobby. A gym is an active use that can help enliven the E. Colorado Blvd frontage and/or the corner. Consider relocating the mail, bicycle and MEP rooms further north of the site or integrate them into the parking garage.
- The surface ground floor parking garage occupies a substantial footprint and limits the full exploration of design potential for the site. Consistent with a project of this scale, consider locating the parking in an underground subterranean level. This alternative would permit alternative site planning and additional design flexibility throughout the site. For example, it would create an opportunity for a more attractive and usable ground floor open space with public amenities.
  - If full or partial subterranean parking levels are not possible, consider a half or split level parking garage.
- Study how the proposal maintains a view corridor north to the San Gabriel Mountains from all outdoor spaces, especially common outdoor areas.
- Consider incorporating public open space on the ground floor as in a courtyard that is designed as an extension of the sidewalk and streetscape.
- Ensure that the overall architectural concept is grounded in established design precedents. All components of the building, such as building volume, mass, scale, design features and treatments, and detailing should support a cohesive and quality design throughout the development and should be compatible with the existing and surrounding context. In

general, study the overall composition of the building and consider how different features relate to each other into a collective whole and strengthens the design. Introduce greater variation in the facades at the ground and upper floors. Carefully consider how the ground floor transitions to the upper levels whether through design detail or material application, or both. Restudy the roofline, including a roof parapet that creates variation while also assists in screening rooftop equipment.

- The design treatment of the two corners where the streets intersect should be carefully considered as focal points of the building and/or points of entry. Both corners should be highlighted to become more prominent or architecturally differentiated, but welcoming and should continue to maintain design consistency with the rest of the building, while looking for opportunities to define the corners. All entrances should be articulated and orient toward the street or open spaces for a seamless transition between private and public realms.
- A stepped back upper level, such as the patio deck at the southeast corner improves the pedestrian scale. However, the proposed feature and its treatment appears disconnected to the rest of the building and its general design concept. The placement of this patio and integration into the building as a whole should be re-addressed.
- All courtyards and common open spaces should be of sufficient size to accommodate residents and visitors. Each outdoor space should be designed with a variety of landscape features and amenities and be programmed for active uses, relaxation and socialization. Some smaller, but usable spaces may be acceptable in conjunction with larger areas. These outdoor spaces should avoid being pass-through spaces.
- Carefully consider how materials are utilized and where they are applied to strengthen the building design and cohesion across all elevations. For example, corrugated metal is only used on the southeast corner. Consider eliminating this material from the design, as it has proven to be poor quality and incompatible with the City's existing fabric.
- Consider how the building's north elevation sensitively transitions to the lower scale residential buildings to the north of the project site.
- Restudy the solid-to-void ratio of the north elevation. All elevations should possess the same or similar design quality.
- The ground floor should be carefully designed to achieve a pedestrian scale, create transparency into and out of the building and contribute to an activated street front.
- Restudy the ground floor of the east elevation and its solid-to-void ratio.
- Consider overall signage design and particularly the location of signs and how they can be incorporated into the building design. The location of the two signs that read "RETAIL 01" and "RETAIL 02" are too high and do not relate to a pedestrian scale and are not consistent with other signs along the same façade.

- The Colorado Boulevard elevations and its architectural design/treatment should reflect the commercial character of the boulevard; while the elevations facing the side streets should possess a more residential feel, scale and character that is a continuation of the design sensibility reflected in the existing residential buildings to the north of the project site. Since each site is facing three street frontages, the design approach should consider the project as three separate buildings. Consider walk-up and two-story (townhouse) units with direct access from the street, deeper front setback and elevated landscape design.
- The location of the dog park should be reconsidered and relocated to a centralized location within the project site away from the existing and adjoining residential buildings to the north.

**4. ACTION ITEM**

**A. NEW OFFICER NOMINATION FOR VICE CHAIR**

The nomination committee presented their recommendations as follows:  
Commissioner Delgado as Vice Chair.

Motion:

Moved and seconded by Commissioners Chiao and Toro

AYES: Commissioners Toro, Rao, Litwin, Delgado, Chiao, and Carpenter

NOES: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Sepulveda (Excused)

ABSTAIN: None

APPROVED: 6-0-1

**5. COMMENTS AND REPORTS FROM STAFF**

Staff reported:

- That the City Council has voted to continue virtual meetings until November 2. There may be a hybrid format to be implemented for City Council meetings only;
- That the new Preliminary Consultation Checklist has been released and is online and available for use; and,
- Reported on upcoming agenda items.

**6. COMMENTS AND REPORTS FROM COMMISSION**

Commissioner Rao inquired about the possibility of returning to the 6:30 pm start time for Design Commission meetings and asked fellow commissioners whether it would present a conflict. Staff committed to returning to this time as soon as possible based on public notices that have already been issued.

**7. COMMENTS AND REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

1. Urban Forestry Advisory Committee - (Carpenter)
2. Historic Preservation Commission - (VACANT)
3. **Planning Commission** - (Delgado)
  - Reported that at the 11/28 meeting they heard the Zoning Code Amendment regarding changes to Planned Development regulations and recommended to eliminate Planned Developments entirely and did not approve staff's recommendations to continue allowing them to be established through modification of the Zoning Code.
4. **Transportation Advisory Commission** - (Litwin)
  - Reported on the properties received from the 710 stub from Caltrans and the intended work to divert traffic off of St. John and Pasadena Avenues to Fair Oaks Avenue and Arroyo Parkway.
5. Arts & Culture Commission - (Sepulveda)
6. Concept Design Review Application Subcommittee - (Toro, Rao, TBD)
7. Las Encinas Psychiatric Hospital & Barn Subcommittee - (Carpenter, TBD)
8. Olivewood (North and South) Subcommittee - (Chiao, Carpenter)
9. 1336 E. Colorado Blvd Subcommittee – (Chiao, Carpenter, TBD)
10. 139 & 150 S. Oak Knoll Ave Subcommittee (Sepulveda, Delgado)
11. 1200 E. California Blvd Subcommittee (Hawthorne, Delgado, Rao)
12. **280 Ramona St Subcommittee** (Chiao, Delgado)
  - Reported that the Commissioners met with the applicant team to address the Design Commission's conditions and will conduct another meeting on Thursday, October 13.

**Projects on Hold**

13. 3200 East Foothill Boulevard (SpaceBank) - (Chiao, Carpenter)
14. 130-140 N. Fair Oaks Avenue Subcommittee - (TBD, TBD, TBD)
15. Design Awards Subcommittee – (TBD, TBD)

**8. ADJOURNMENT – COMMISSIONER RAO ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 6:35 P.M.**



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Kevin Johnson, Principal Planner



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Michi Takeda, Recording Secretary