



## PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** FEBRUARY 25, 2020  
**TO:** DESIGN COMMISSION  
**FROM:** DAVID M. REYES, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
**SUBJECT:** PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION - NEW CONSTRUCTION OF A FIVE-STORY, 24-UNIT MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL PROJECT  
164 CHESTNUT STREET

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### **Project Description:**

This proposal is for the construction of a new, five-story approximately 22,492-square-foot, 24-unit multi-family residential building with two levels of subterranean parking located at 164 Chestnut Street. The site, located at the southwest corner of Chestnut Street and Townsend Place, is designated Medium Mixed Use in the General Plan. It is within the Central District Specific Plan area and in the CD-1 Zoning District (Central District Specific Plan, Old Pasadena Subdistrict). The site is an irregular trapezoidal shape and is currently occupied by an eligible, undesignated historic two-story American Foursquare style house built in 1904, which has obtained approval to be relocated to a vacant site at 781 S. Grand Avenue. The submitted tree inventory indicates that there are no trees on the site; however, there is one public street tree along the site frontage. Surrounding properties are developed with one-to-four-story residential buildings, three-to-four-story office buildings, one-to-three-story church buildings and surface parking lots. The Metro Gold Line right-of-way is in close proximity to the site, separated by a development site, on which a 100-unit residential development has been approved, but not yet constructed. Nearby historical resources include:

- Old Pasadena Historic District; nearby contributing structures include:
  - St. Andrew's Church, 1929, 281 N. Raymond Avenue
  - Fannie Bonham Rowhouses, 1898, 221 N. Raymond Avenue
- Pasadena Civic Center Historic District, including nearby contributing site - Memorial Park

The proposed project consists of a single 57-foot, 4-inch-high building. Two levels of subterranean parking with 27 spaces are proposed, with access from Chestnut Street at the eastern end of the site. The building is proposed to be a contemporary design with a flat roof, articulated massing, high levels of floor-to-ceiling glazing, projecting balconies with glass railings, and fiber-cement and stucco exterior materials. The front façade is articulated by a four-story angled volume, with the main five-story volume behind.

### **Applicable Design Guidelines:**

- Design-Related Goals and Policies in the Land Use Element of the General Plan

- Design Guidelines in the Central District Specific Plan

**Previous/Existing Entitlements:**

- Minor Conditional Use Permit 6731 to relocate the existing house to 781 S. Grand Ave.
- Certificate of Appropriateness to relocate and rehabilitate the house

**Approvals Needed/Project Scheduling:**

- Concept and Final Design Review (Design Commission)
- Building Permits (Building Staff)

**CEQA Clearance:**

This is preliminary consultation regarding design review and is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

**Staff Observations:**

**Applicable Design Guidelines:**

The following design guidelines are applicable to the project and should guide further development and study of the project as it moves forward in the design review process:

**Design-Related Policies in the Land Use Element of the General Plan:**

- 4.10: Locate and design buildings to relate to and frame major public streets, open spaces, and cityscape. New development at intersections should consider any number of corner treatments, and should balance safety and accessibility concerns with the vision of the area and the need for buildings to engage the street and create a distinct urban edge.
- 4.11: Require that development demonstrates a contextual relationship with neighboring structures and sites addressing such elements as building scale, massing, orientation, setbacks, buffering, the arrangement of shared and private open spaces, visibility, privacy, automobile and truck access, impacts of noise and lighting, landscape quality, infrastructure, and aesthetics.
- 7.1: Design each building as a high-quality, long term addition to the City's urban fabric; exterior design and buildings material shall exhibit permanence and quality, minimize maintenance concerns, and extend the life of the building.
- 7.2: Allow for the development of a diversity of buildings styles. Support innovative and creative design solutions to issues related to context and environmental sustainability.
- 7.3: Require that new and adaptively re-used buildings are designed to respect and complement the defining built form, massing, scale, modulation, and architectural detailing of their contextual setting.

- 23.3: Provide appropriate setbacks, consistent with the surrounding neighborhood, along the street frontage and, where there are setbacks, ensure adequate landscaping is provided.
- 25.4: Require that new development protect community character by providing architecture, landscaping, and urban design of equal or greater quality than existing and by respecting the architectural character and scale of adjacent buildings.

Central District Specific Plan:

- SP 1.1 Provide for the functional and visual integration of building, services, vehicular access and parking, and “outdoor rooms” such as plazas, fore-courts, interior courtyards, and passages.
- SP 1.5 Buffer adjacent sensitive land uses from undesirable impacts that may originate from a site; buffers may be landscape and/or architectural in character.
- SP 3.6 Dimension outdoor spaces to human occupation; they should be proportioned to their surroundings and envisioned use.
- SP 4.1 Make plazas and courtyards comfortable for human activity and social interaction – standing, sitting, talking, eating.
- BD 3.1 Establish a building’s overall appearance on a clear and pleasing set of proportions; a building should exhibit a sense of order.
- BD 6.2 Use materials, colors, and details to unify a building’s appearance; buildings and structures should be built of compatible materials on all sides.
- BD 6.3 Design architectural features that are an integral part of the building, and discourage ornamentation and features that appear “tacked-on” or artificially thin; this applies to balconies, canopies and awnings, as well as exposed rafters and beams, moldings, downspouts, scuppers, etc.
- UR 4.2 Minimize the amount of street frontage devoted to vehicular access, and locate points of access so as to not dominate street elevations; take access off of an alley, where feasible.
- UR 5.2 Create a simple, pleasing composition that uses a common vocabulary of forms, architectural elements, and materials; continue design elements, detailing, and materials around the entire structure.

**Potential Design Issues:**

- Explore additional means of providing greater light and air separation, as well as privacy, between the proposed building and the future building to the east. Consider utilizing height averaging to achieve this goal. This could also contribute to a more expressive roofline for the building.
- Further explore the design of the parking structure entry portal to create a more integrated massing at that location.

- Consider whether the side and rear yards may incorporate usable outdoor space for adjoining residential units at the ground level, or enhance common courtyard spaces.
- The project courtyards should be placed in locations that will ensure their usability by its residents. The courtyards should be designed to include useful amenities and features such as shading devices appropriate to their solar exposure, seating and cooking facilities, water features, etc. The landscape and hardscape design should reflect the local climate and landscape traditions and should relate to the design of the building.
- As currently proposed, the building incorporates dark metal banding, panelized fiber-cement cladding and glass-and-metal railings set against small areas of white stucco walls at the north end of the building facing Chestnut Street, with the remainder of the building facades being entirely white stucco with solid white stucco balcony railings. The mix of materials at the front of the building should be carried throughout all of the facades to ensure a complete, holistic design on all building facades. In particular, the northeast corner has a thin, insubstantial appearance due to the transition of materials at an outside corner, and this should be further studied to ensure that the building exhibits a sense of solidity and permanence.

**Project Scheduling/Sequencing:**

- Concept and Final Design Review by the Design Commission
- Building Permits

Respectfully Submitted,




David M. Reyes  
Director of Planning & Community Development Department

Prepared by:



Kevin Johnson  
Senior Planner

Reviewed by:



Leon E. White  
Principal Planner

**Attachments:**

- A. Current Planning (Zoning) compliance matrix
- B. Applicant submittal package (4 separate packets: plans, design evolution exhibit, visual context photo montage, design narrative)

## Memo

Date: February 18, 2020

To: Kevin Johnson, Senior Planner  
Design and Historic Preservation

From: Jason Van Patten, Planner  
Current Planning

Subject: 164 Chestnut Street

Staff reviewed the proposed project for the subject property referenced above. Following an analysis by Zoning Staff, the following was generated:

<b>Zoning Designation:</b>	
CD-1 (Central District Specific Plan, Old Pasadena subdistrict)	
<b>General Plan Designation:</b>	
Medium Mixed Use (0.0-2.25 FAR, 0-87 du/acre)	
<b>Lot Size</b>	
10,011 square feet (per plan)	
<b>Density</b>	
<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
87 du/acre or 20 units (before density bonus)	24 units (2 very low, 22 market rate)
10% very low units = 32.5% bonus 20 + bonus = 27 units (with density bonus)	
<b>Floor Area Ratio (FAR)</b>	
<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
2.25 or 22,524 gross square feet	2.25 or 22,492 square feet
<b>Setbacks</b>	
<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
Front – Minimum 5' setback required; may set back up to 10' maximum (type 2)	5'
Sides – 10' minimum	10' (east) 10' (west)
Rear – 10' minimum	10'
<b>Height Limit</b>	
<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
60' (75' w/height averaging)	57'4"

<b>Community Space</b>	
<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
30% of net floor area (19,912 square feet) = 5,974 square feet	6,059 square feet
<b>Courtyard</b>	
<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
Ground-floor landscaped courtyard that shall be a minimum of 20 feet in any direction	Ground-floor courtyard measuring a minimum of 20 feet by 20 feet is proposed on the eastern half of the site
<b>Street Entries</b>	
<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
Units located adjacent to the street shall have direct entries from the street.	Units located adjacent to the street provide street entry.
<b>Vehicle Parking</b>	
<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
0-1 bedroom = 1 space 2-3 bedroom = 2 spaces 4 or more = 2.5 spaces  21 (0-1 bedroom) = 21 spaces 3 (2 bedroom) = 6 spaces Total = 27 spaces	27
<b>Bicycle Parking</b>	
1 space for every 6 units (all Class 1; garages or accessible indoor areas count)  Units (24) Total: 4 spaces	4 enclosed spaces in garage
<b>Driveway Location</b>	
<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
Not more than 5' from a side property line. The Design Commission may modify the location of a driveway to preserve a street tree or tree located on the site.	<b>More than 5' from a side property line. Existing street tree may limit location.</b>