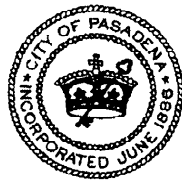


**CORRESPONDENCE
FROM
NOVEMBER 2, 2009
COUNCIL MEETING**



Date: November 2, 2009

To: City Council

From: City Manager

Re: Additional Information about Substitute Material/Finish on Cornice, 125 North Raymond Avenue (Raymond Renaissance Project)

At its meeting on October 19, 2009, the City Council continued its consideration of the call for review of a decision by the Design Commission regarding the substitute material on the cornice on the new six-story building (Raymond Renaissance) at 125 N. Raymond Avenue. The Council asked staff to research more information about the durability of the siloxane plaster cornice and about the effect of resurfacing the existing plaster on any warranties from the manufacturer. The Council also suggested consulting with members of the Design Commission about suggestions for a resolution of this issue.

In summary after researching the material and discussing it with both the supplier and the installer, it is a high quality durable material. On October 29th there was a conference call with participation from the two Design Commissioners, staff and the developer. The Design Commission concurred that the material was high quality but the finish was the issue. Changing the finish requires erection of scaffolding around the building and preparation of the surface so a new plaster surface could be applied. The Design Commissioners favored a change in finish either now or in the future. Given the work necessary to accomplish a change in finish, staff recommends accepting the material and finish as installed.

1. Additional Information about Italian Plaster Cornice

Staff spoke with both the contractor responsible for the installation (California Plastering from Sun Valley) and the supplier (Vero Fine Italian Finishes from Orange). From these sources, we confirmed that siloxane plaster, a relatively new product, is impregnated with a water-repellent polymer—siloxane—which has “good weather-resistant” properties. A specialty finish, Italian plaster is made from crushed limestone, marble dust, and colored pigments. It is usually applied to interior walls and ceilings and treated to resemble polished marble. It is much stronger and more durable than a standard, painted Portland-cement surface. It also outlasts stucco, and it holds color against ultra-violet degradation better than stucco. It has some flexibility and can withstand limited expansion and contraction.

Although the contractor and supplier do not offer warranties for plaster finishes, the contractor offers a ten-year warranty on workmanship. Resurfacing an existing

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Submitted by staff

installation would not void a warranty. This warranty is more of a response to the requirement for warranties associated with condominium construction than it is a reflection of the expected life of the product.

A sound, relatively new surface could be recoated by troweling on a new application or, if the surface requires more preparation, by priming and adding one or two coatings. Neither the contractor nor the supplier has been asked to resurface an existing installation with Italian plaster. This application would require that scaffolding be reinstalled along the entire length of the new building on Holly Street, N. Raymond Avenue, and Electric Alley.

2. Consultation with Members of the Design Commission

On October 29, 2009, staff conferred with the owners of the Raymond Renaissance project and two members of the Design Commission.¹ The members of the Design Commission disagreed with the idea of mitigating the substitute material by adding landscaping at the street level. They asserted that the Italian plaster is an appropriate high-quality material and that their objections were only to the “faux finish”—using plaster to imitate copper—and not to the color.

This group discussed three options: resurfacing the existing plaster finish at this time; deferring a resurfacing of the plaster to a future date (e.g., whenever maintenance of the building requires scaffolding of the exterior); or leaving the existing condition. Among the group—including the two members of the Design Commission—there was no consensus about recommending one of these options to the City Council. Staff continues to recommend, as indicated in the October 12 agenda report, that the installation not be altered at this time because the Italian plaster is a high-quality material and because of the cost to scaffold the entire exterior of the six-story building.

Respectfully submitted,



MICHAEL J. BECK
City Manager

¹ A third member of the Design Commission declined to participate in the discussion.