

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL **DATE:** January 12, 2009

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: PREAPPLICATION CONFERENCE FOR
REUSE OF A MIXED-USE BUILDING BY THE CHURCH OF
SCIENTOLOGY AT 35 S. RAYMOND AVENUE

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is being provided for information only.

BACKGROUND:

This project summary is being presented to the City Council per Preapplication Conference (PAC) guidelines, which call for staff to present projects of community-wide significance to the City Council for informational purposes. Projects of community-wide significance include new uses of 50,000 square feet and above. This project includes new uses for an existing 60,800 square foot building.

The Church of Scientology has purchased the historic Braley Building at 35 S. Raymond Avenue in Old Pasadena. Although recently used for restaurant, retail and office uses, the building has been vacant for over a year, and the Church is planning to reuse the building for its church use, including a chapel, library, bookstore, and offices.

Project Description

The building is on an interior lot on the west side of Raymond Avenue just south of Colorado Blvd. It has four stories and a basement that total 60,800 square feet. The application proposes interior demolition and construction to convert the building to a single use; new mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems; minor exterior repairs and alterations; and new signs. The floor plans include offices

and storage in the basement; a chapel, classrooms and offices on the first floor; a bookstore, classrooms, and offices on the second floor; classrooms on the third floor; and a library, saunas, a lounge and rooms for “auditing” sessions (a form of counseling) on the fourth floor. The hours of operation are proposed to be seven days a week from 9:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M.

Discretionary Reviews

The uses are generally allowed in the Central District. However, staff needs additional information to confirm that the ground floor uses conform to the uses allowed by the Central District Specific Plan (see below). Following a determination that the project is in compliance with the zoning code, the Design and Historic Preservation staff will review an application for Design Review of new signs and proposed exterior alterations (e.g., storefront infill, new art glass, new awnings, and replacement of any deteriorated windows).

Summary of Preapplication Conference Comments

On September 16, 2008 staff conducted a meeting between the applicant and City Departments. The meeting identified the following additional considerations:

Environmental Review: The project, as described, appears to be categorically exempt from CEQA. The only discretionary action identified at this time is design review of exterior alterations.

Land Use and Parking: A significant concern is how the applicant will meet the parking requirements of the Zoning Code. The proposed use does not include any new parking spaces. Currently parking is provided for this block through public parking garages. If the proposed use will intensify the parking requirements, then additional off-site parking will be required. Some of the proposed uses require further clarification (e.g., religious vs. classroom vs. office), it is unclear whether the parking requirements will be met without the provision of additional parking. Staff has requested more details concerning the specific uses of portions of the building.

A second issue is a need to clarify what the uses are on the first floor and whether they satisfy the zoning code requirement that 50% of the street frontage have uses that are pedestrian-oriented.

Building Code: The project involves redesigning the interior for a major tenant with over 25,000 square feet. These tenant improvements will be subject to the City’s Green Building Ordinance. Additionally, the building code restricts assembly use above the ground floor for buildings with wood floors like this one, and staff will work with the church on this issue as they develop final design details.

Design & Historic Preservation Review: Exterior alterations to the Raymond Ave. storefronts, new signs, and treatments for upper floor windows will require design

review. Some of the proposed signs will need to be modified (reduced in size and/or relocated) to meet the provisions of the Zoning Code.

Timeline

Date	Activity
August 8, 2008	Application submitted for Pre-Application Conference
September 16, 2008	Preliminary Plan Review meeting with applicant
January, 2009	Submittal of additional data needed for zoning compliance review
February, 2009	Determination that project complies with zoning
March, 2009	Application for exterior alterations and signs
March-April, 2009	Design Review by Director of Planning & Development

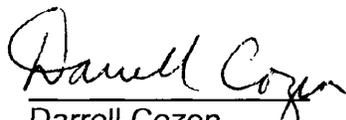
FISCAL IMPACT

The applicant will be required to pay fees for processing a Design Review application. The project will also generate plan check and permit fees and construction tax.

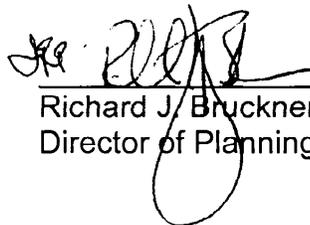
Respectfully submitted


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Approved by:


Richard J. Bruckner
Director of Planning and Development

Attachment A: Proposed Site Plan
Attachment B: Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations