

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
PLANNING DIVISION

July 29, 2009

Mr. Gene Buchanan  
Ms. Marilyn Dee Buchanan  
Buchanan Raymond LLC  
50 Fern Drive  
Pasadena, CA 91105-1256

[fax: 795-2408]

**125 North Raymond Avenue**

Raymond Renaissance (New Building Adjacent to Former Raymond Theatre)  
Minor Changes to an Approved Project: Substitute Material/Finish on Cornice  
PLN2005-00511  
Council District 3

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Buchanan:

Acting under the provisions of §17.61.030 and §17.64.050 of the Pasadena Municipal Code, the staff of the Planning Division has reviewed your request for minor modifications to the approved final design of the mixed-use project at 125 North Raymond Avenue (Raymond Renaissance). The site is in the Old Pasadena Historic District. The issue, first communicated to you in a letter dated May 11, 2009, concerns a change to the material of the projecting cornice above the sixth floor.

On October 24, 2005, the Design Commission reviewed your application for final design of the Raymond Renaissance project. The application specified that the cornice—a major feature of the building—would be of extruded copper. The Commission approved the application with conditions, none of which modified the proposed installation of a copper cornice. After this meeting, the staff sent you a letter (dated October 27, 2005) recording the decision of the Commission. This letter included a standard provision informing you about a process in the municipal code (P.M.C. §17.64.050) authorizing changes to approved projects before or during construction:

*Changes in the approved design of the project, whether before construction or during construction, must be submitted to City staff for review and approval. The municipal code authorizes the staff to approve minor changes to the project including the conditions of approval. Major changes, however, must be reviewed as part of a separate application for major changes to an approved project (for which the filing fee is equal to one-half the original fee). Two applications for major changes to a project may be filed during a calendar year. Major changes may be approved only if there are findings of changed circumstances that justify the revisions.*

During the early phases of this project, we met with you to discuss issues on the interior and exterior of the building. Our expectation was that this level of communication and collaboration would continue through all phases of construction and include important decisions such as substituting another material for the copper cornice. At no time, however, did we receive a request to discuss a change to the cornice on the six-story building.

In early May, after removal of the construction scaffolding, staff noticed that the cornice was not copper but a painted finish simulating the verdigris of aged copper on an undetermined surface. We sent you a letter (May 11, 2009) about this change to the cornice and then received correspondence from you (dated June 4, 2009) in which you explain the reason for the change "...horizontal application of copper in that area could not be guaranteed by our contractor over the term of our 10 year tail on the insurance required for a Condo project in California. The horizontal application could not be guaranteed not to sag and bag in this type of installation..." This letter also refers to a "formed material" as the substitute for the copper, and it describes "...the use of plaster with a hand finished application of color." Responding to this letter, we asked for additional information about the plaster and substrate, which we received on July 19, 2009. This information documents that the cornice is a composite of gypsum sheathing, lath, brown and scratch coats of plaster, and finish coatings of a glazed Italian plaster with colorants (presumably applied with brush and sponge) and a sealer.

The coloring of the finish is a reddish-brown field with irregular blue-green splotches. The intended effect of this "faux" finish is oxidized copper. As we noted in the letter of May 11, however, this finish:

resembles only one stage of the normal oxidation of copper. As a result, it artificially creates the appearance of oxidizing copper suspended in time and permanently transitioning to its eventual sulfate patina. The blue-green coloring of the finish also creates the appearance of oxidized copper in humid climates; in an arid climate, as in Pasadena, copper oxides more uniformly and with less coloration.

In accordance with §17.61.030 and §17.64.050 of the *Pasadena Municipal Code*, the staff:

#### **Environmental Clearance**

**Finds** that the activity described in this application was subject to adequate environmental review in a revised final environmental impact report and addendum certified (together, the revised FEIR) with findings of fact and a statement of overriding considerations for the the City Council Raymond Theater Reuse and Mixed-Use Project ("project"), now known as the "Raymond Renaissance," on January 7, 2002 and a Second Consistency Finding to the revised FEIR pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code § 21000 et seq.) and State CEQA Guidelines §15164 (May 2005).

#### **Findings for Approval of Modifications (Minor Changes) to an Approved Project**

The staff finds that the change to the material of the cornice:

- A. Is consistent with the intent of the original approval (the physical form, projection, and placement of the cornice complies with the approved design).
- B. Is consistent with all applicable provisions of this Zoning Code (*consistency confirmed*)

- C. Does not involve a feature of the project that was specifically addressed in, or was a basis for findings in a Negative Declaration (ND), Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), or Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project (*minor revisions to this project are about aesthetic features*);
- D. Does not involve a feature of the project that was specifically addressed in, or was a basis for conditions of approval for the project, or that was a specific consideration by the applicable review authority in the approval of the permit (*unrelated to conditions*); and
- E. Does not expand the approved floor area or any outdoor activity area by 10 percent or more over the life of the project (*no request to increase floor area*).
- F. Finds that the proposed change—if modified to comply with the condition of approval—is consistent with the applicable design guidelines.
- G. Finds that there are changed circumstances sufficient to justify the proposed changes (*representations from developer about structural properties of installing copper with the specified spans and projections, concerns about liability and waterproofing*), and
- H. Based on these findings, **approves** the application for changes to the previously approved design with the following **condition**:
  - To avoid falsifying the material of a major feature of the building, the plastered (spatula stucco) cornice shall be resurfaced with a new pigmented coating (or siloxane-based coating) to create the appearance of a specialty plaster (e.g., a solid color, such as green or brown; a coating with a “veiled effect”—or similar effect—within the range of standard finishes for exterior plaster;
  - The color and finish of the resurfaced cornice shall be compatible with the design of the new six-story building; and
  - The staff shall review and approve the alternative color, finish, and texture of the resurfaced cornice **before** initiation of this work.

#### **Guidelines in Support of this Decision (Central District Specific Plan)**

*BD 6.1 Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to Downtown; exterior design and building materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to an urban setting.*

*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*

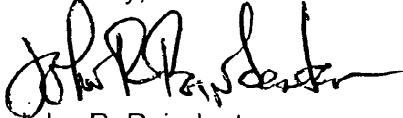
*Please also note that we are also awaiting final details of the finishes and ornament on the marquee. At a recent site visit, we also discussed extending the brickwork and cornice on upper portion of the north elevation, where it abuts the elevator tower. To date, this work has not taken place.*

#### **Effective Date ♦ Call for Review ♦ Appeal**

This decision becomes effective on **Tuesday, August 11, 2009**. Before the effective date, the City Council or Design Commission may call for a review of this decision. In addition, you or any person affected by this decision may appeal it to the Design Commission before the effective date by filing an application for an appeal (window #4, Permit Center) and paying the appeal fee of \$257.50. Appeals must cite a reason for objecting to a decision. Please note that appeals and calls for review are held as *de novo* hearings, meaning that the lower decision is

set aside and the entire application is reviewed as a new proposal. The last day to file an appeal is **Monday, August 10, 2009.**

Sincerely,

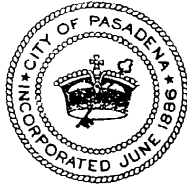
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John R. Poindexter", written over a horizontal line.

John R. Poindexter

Planning Manager, Planning and Development Department  
626-744-7232      [jpoindexter@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:jpoindexter@cityofpasadena.net)

cc: address file, chronological file, Tidemark, City Council, Design Commission, Council District 3 Representative

Enclosure



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
PLANNING DIVISION

August 26, 2009

Mr. Gene Buchanan  
Ms. Marilyn Dee Buchanan  
Buchanan Raymond LLC  
50 Fern Drive  
Pasadena, CA 91105-1256

**125 North Raymond Avenue**

Raymond Renaissance (New Building Adjacent to Former Raymond Theatre)

After-the-fact Request for Minor Changes to an Approved Project

**Substitute Material/Finish on Roofline Cornice** PLN2005-00511 Council District 3

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Buchanan:

Acting under the provisions of §17.61.030 and §17.64.050 of the Pasadena Municipal Code, the Design Commission reviewed your request for minor modifications to the approved final design of the mixed-use project at 125 North Raymond Avenue (Raymond Renaissance) at a public meeting on August 24, 2009 in the Pasadena Senior Center. The Commission conducted this review as a call for review of a staff decision (dated July 29, 2009).

The building, at the northwest corner of E. Holly Street and N. Raymond Avenue, is in the Old Pasadena Historic District. The issue, first communicated to you in a letter from the Planning & Development Department on May 11, 2009, concerns a change to the material of the projecting cornice above the sixth floor. This change, recently completed during construction, deviates from the material specified in your application for final design review of the Raymond Renaissance project. This application specified that the cornice—a major feature of the building—would be of extruded copper. On October 24, 2005, the Commission approved the application with conditions, none of which modified the proposal to install a cornice clad in copper.

As constructed, the existing cornice is a composite of gypsum sheathing, lath, brown and scratch coats of plaster, and finish coatings of a glazed Italian plaster with colorants (presumably applied with brush and sponge) and a sealer. The coloring of the finish is a reddish-brown field with irregular blue-green splotches. The intended effect of this “faux” finish is oxidized copper.

August 26, 2009

The change to the approved design is minor because it is limited to the material and finish of one architectural feature. In profile and in placement, the cornice complies with the approved design.

In accordance with §17.61.030 and §17.64.050 of the *Pasadena Municipal Code*, the Commission:

### **Environmental Clearance**

Found that the revised final environmental impact report and addendum certified by the City Council on January 7, 2002—with findings of fact and a statement of overriding considerations for the Raymond Theater Reuse and Mixed-Use Project ("project") now known as the "Raymond Renaissance"—and a Second Consistency Finding to the revised FEIR pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code § 21000 et seq.) and State CEQA Guidelines §15164 (May 2005) apply to this action.

### **Findings for Approval of Modifications (Minor Changes) to an Approved Project**

The Commission found that the change to the material of the cornice:

- a. Is consistent with the intent of the original approval (*the physical form, projection, and placement of the cornice comply with the approved design*).
- b. Is consistent with all applicable provisions of this Zoning Code (*consistency confirmed*)
- c. Does not involve a feature of the project that was specifically addressed in, or was a basis for findings in a Negative Declaration (ND), Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), or Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project (*the material of the cornice is not addressed in the environmental impact report*);
- d. Does not involve a feature of the project that was specifically addressed in, or was a basis for conditions of approval for the project, or that was a specific consideration by the applicable review authority in the approval of the permit (*the change of material is unrelated to conditions of approval*); and
- e. Does not expand the approved floor area or any outdoor activity area by 10 percent or more over the life of the project (*change of material is unrelated to floor area*).
- f. Finds that the proposed change—if modified to comply with the condition of approval—is consistent with the applicable design guidelines.
- g. Finds that there are changed circumstances sufficient to justify the proposed changes (*representations from developer about structural properties of installing copper with the specified spans and projections, concerns about liability and waterproofing*), and
- h. Based on these findings, **approves** the request for changes to the previously approved design with the following **condition**:

In lieu of the existing plaster finish, the applicant and the applicant's architect or consultant shall propose a method to change the finish (e.g., paint in a solid color)—and this proposal to change the finish shall be reviewed and approved by a three-person subcommittee of the Design Commission (Khang, Moreno, Ipekjian).

The Commission also indicated that this work may be delayed to accommodate construction loans and other financing issues.

**Guidelines in Support of this Decision (Central District Specific Plan)**

*BD 6.1 Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to Downtown; exterior design and building materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to an urban setting.*

*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*

***Effective Date ♦ Call for Review ♦ Appeal***

This decision becomes effective on **Friday, September 4, 2009**. Before the effective date, the City Council may call for a review of this decision. In addition, you or any person affected by this decision may appeal it to the City Council before the effective date by filing an application for an appeal (City Clerk, room S228, City Hall, 100 N. Garfield Avenue). Appeals must cite a reason for objecting to a decision. Please note that appeals and calls for review are held as *de novo* hearings, meaning that the lower decision is set aside and the entire application is reviewed as a new proposal. The last day to file an appeal or call for review is **Thursday, September 3, 2009**.

Sincerely,



Jeff Cronin

Principal Planner, Design & Historic Preservation Section

P: 626-744-3757 F: 626-396-8520 Email: [jcronin@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:jcronin@cityofpasadena.net)

cc: address file, chronological file, Tidemark, City Council, Design Commission, Council District 3 Field Representative



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
PLANNING DIVISION

May 11, 2009

Mr. Gene Buchanan  
Ms. Marilyn Dee Buchanan  
Buchanan Raymond LLC  
50 Fern Drive  
Pasadena, CA 91105-1256

[fax: 795-2408]

**125 North Raymond Avenue**

Raymond Renaissance (New Building Adjacent to Former Raymond Theatre)  
PLN2005-00511

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Buchanan:

We realize that the Raymond Renaissance project has been a long and challenging undertaking with many complexities. Nevertheless, as you near completion of construction, I want to bring your attention a recent observation about a change to an important feature on the exterior of the new building (125 N. Raymond Avenue). Planning staff noticed that the material selected for the extruded cornice above the fifth floor is not copper as specified in the drawings and elevations submitted for final design review and as approved by the Design Commission. The existing installation is a formed material with a coating of irregular blue-green splotches on a reddish-brown background. Designed to simulate the verdigris of aged copper, the finish actually resembles only one stage of the normal oxidation of copper. As a result, it artificially creates the appearance of oxidizing copper suspended in time and permanently transitioning to its eventual sulfate patina. The blue-green coloring of the finish also creates the appearance of oxidized copper in humid climates; in an arid climate, as in Pasadena, copper oxides more uniformly and with less coloration.

We realize that the decision to change the material of the cornice may be have been because of cost or concerns about the structural propensities of copper over the long term. As you aware, there is a process in the municipal code to revisit earlier decisions about the design of a building and to submit changes to an approved project for review and approval before installation (P.M.C. §17.64.050). We communicated this information to you in the two decision letters for the project (concept design and final design):

*Changes in the approved design of the project, whether before construction or during construction, must be submitted to City staff for review and approval. The municipal code authorizes the staff to approve minor changes to the project including the conditions of approval. Major changes, however, must be reviewed as part of a*



*separate application for major changes to an approved project (for which the filing fee is equal to one-half the original fee). Two applications for major changes to a project may be filed during a calendar year. Major changes may be approved only if there are findings of changed circumstances that justify the revisions.*

During the early phases of this project, we frequently met with you to discuss issues on both the interior and exterior of the building. Our expectation was that this level of communication and collaboration would continue through all phases of construction and include important decisions such as substituting another material for the copper cornice.

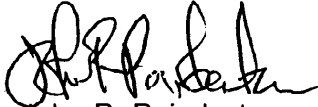
As required by code, we request that you submit the enclosed application for changes to an approved project with a description of the existing installation and a statement about the reasons for the change in material.

In addition, we would like a status report from you on compliance with the conditions of final design approval:

1. Final details (e.g., shop drawings; section-through drawing) about the fabrication, the finishes, the glass soffit, the ornament, and the sign boards on the **reconstructed marquee** on the Raymond Theater building shall be submitted for final review and approval.
2. The **bracketed armature** for the signs and the **lamps** on the armatures shall be redesigned in a simpler and more contemporary manner to relate better to the final design of the new building [sheet A38].
3. Exterior **vents**, as much as possible, shall avoid penetrating primary street-facing elevations; they may, however, exit through return walls in recessed balconies and terraces. [CD Guidelines, Building Design, 6.5 through-the-wall vents should not be placed on primary elevations.]
4. The two samples of the **brick** are too close in color and shall be reselected.
5. The wood-framed **windows and doors at the ground level** shall be replaced with a steel-framed system (to relate better to the aluminum-clad window assemblies on the upper floors).
6. The finish on the aluminum-clad **window assemblies on the upper floors** shall be changed from black to a lighter color.
7. The proportions of the **bulkhead** shown on sheet A20 (10-10-05 submittal) shall govern as opposed to the detail (undated sketch). Bulkhead shall remain at a constant height; the grade at sidewalk may vary.
8. The grout and caulking in the **engineered-stone coursing** shall be color coordinated to make a more unified appearance.
9. The **brick coursing** (bond) above the ground floor shall be coordinated with the window openings and other major features.
10. The outer edge (fascia) of the **copper-clad canopy** shall be increased in size to a minimum of 12 inches.
11. The **transoms** at the ground level shall be operable.
12. A sample of the **grillework** for the screening in the second-level openings and the balcony guard rails (on the west elevation of the theater building) shall be submitted for review and approval.
13. The locations of the **seismic control joints** in the thin-set brick shall be coordinated with the overall design of the elevations.
14. The projecting copper **canopy** shall overlap horizontally—possibly by 12 inches to 14 inches—over the face of the adjoining brick parapets.

15. Additional details shall be submitted to illustrate the **joints** between the bonded gunited wall and the cut concrete in the existing board-formed concrete wall—and how the windows and doors transition into those pieces.
16. A **sample wall panel** (approximately 4' x 8') with the colors of the brick, mortar, and portion of a window shall be constructed on site for review and approval.

Sincerely,



John R. Poindexter

Planning Manager, Planning and Development Department  
626-744-7232      [jpoindexter@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:jpoindexter@cityofpasadena.net)

cc: address file, chronological file, Tidemark

Enclosure