

ATTACHMENT C

PRIOR LAND-USE APPROVALS: NOVEMBER 26, 2009

Prior land entitlements granted this project by the Council are as follows:

1. **A new, five-story commercial building of 159,829 square feet** (145,422 square feet of office and 14,407 square feet of ground-floor retail). The building entitlements include Adjustment Permit for four deviations from the Zoning Code, including: building height; to exceed FAR in one FAR district; to not construct the building at the property lines on E. Colorado Boulevard and S. El Molino Avenue; and to reduce the required number of loading spaces from five to two. The building entitlements also include a floor area ratio increase of 10%. The project design cannot be required to be altered such that the applicant involuntarily relinquishes any of these adjustments.
2. **A six-level subterranean parking garage** with a total of 522 parking spaces. The garage would include 155 spaces for public parking. Garage access is from S. El Molino Avenue. The 155 public parking spaces available at all times, and the 367 project parking spaces available after hours were specifically cited in the Statement of Overriding Considerations adopted by Council. The number of parking spaces (project or public) cannot be reduced.
3. **A plaza for public use on S. El Molino Avenue.** The plaza was specifically cited in approvals for a variance to allow an increased setback on S. El Molino and cited as a public benefit of the project in the Statement of Overriding Considerations adopted by the Council. The landscaped area and enhanced hardscape outdoor public open space as approved by Council was approximately 9,800 square feet, the vast majority of which included the plaza. The plaza cannot be substantially reduced beyond that square footage.
4. **A pedestrian paseo linking the Arcade Lane building** and its retail shops to the east with the proposed new retail development and S. El Molino Avenue to the west. The provision of the paseo was cited in approvals for a variance to allow an increased setback on S. El Molino and cited as a public benefit of the project in the Statement of Overriding Considerations adopted by the Council. The paseo cannot be deleted.

PROJECT RESPONSE TO DESIGN GUIDELINES AND SPECIFIC PLAN:

Building's Response to Central District Specific Plan Public Realm Design Guidelines:

CC 1.2: **Provide sufficient building height and mass to spatially define public streets** and civic spaces; establish a strong relationship between buildings and streets.

CC 1.3: **Encourage infill development** and retention of buildings that define the street and contribute to an urban identity.

CC 2.2: **Orient building entrances toward public space**, and encourage adjacent ground floor uses that animate and enliven the space.

CC 2.5: **Create strong physical connections** between public space and neighboring development.

CC 3.1: Regard sidewalks and paths as unifying elements throughout Downtown; design and **locate pathways and walks to promote physical continuity** and connection.

CC 3.2: **Promote new development that extends existing circulation patterns** and connects important centers of activity.

CC 6.1: **Emphasize infill development of vacant or underdeveloped land**, especially projects that will promote a distinctive urban character.

CC 6.2: **Support infill development that visually unifies the street**; respect the street-oriented development patterns of existing buildings.

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 2.1: **Locate and orient buildings to positively define public streets and civic spaces**, such as public plazas; maintain a continuous building street wall and in general limit spatial gaps to those necessary to accommodate vehicular and pedestrian access.

SP 3.7: **Link adjoining outdoor spaces** with comfortable paths and walks to create a network of spaces.

SP 6.1: **Encourage subterranean and structured parking.**

Building response to Central District Specific Plan - Pasadena Playhouse Sub-district Design Guidelines:

G1: Build intensity along Colorado Boulevard.

G2: Reduce parking's visual appearance.

G3: Introduce courtyards and passages.

Building Response to Sub-district Concept: Pasadena Playhouse (Section 7 of Central District Specific Plan):

Mixed-use development: A mixture of land uses, including urban housing, vertical mixed-use development projects and non-traditional housing types (i.e., work-live and loft style housing) will encourage full-time vitality that is in keeping with the culture and arts orientation of the area. Dwelling, working, commerce and recreation are all activities that should take place within the Sub-district.

Pasadena's Main Street: The physical orientation, massing and form of buildings along Colorado Boulevard should also communicate the unique cultural and arts identity of this particular area. An important measure will be to improve retail continuity along the street, as well as introduce new upper story residential and office development in support of retail activity; residential uses are not permitted on the ground floor along Colorado Boulevard.

Improve sidewalk connections with Colorado Boulevard; connecting side streets that will draw pedestrians from residential areas located to the north and south, including El Molino Avenue. Streetscape enhancements and infill development that will make the Sub-district's streets more appealing and close gaps in the street wall are recommended.

Project Overview

The proposed project has several components:

1. Demolish an existing two-story commercial building and parking lot. **One Coral tree** is a protected specimen. The City Council approved removal of the tree based on the finding, *as represented by a licensed arborist, that the present condition of the tree, was such that it is not reasonably likely to survive.*
2. Construct a new, **five-story commercial building of 159,829 square feet** (145,422 square feet of office and 14,407 square feet of ground-floor retail).
3. Construct a **six-level subterranean parking garage with a total of 522 parking spaces**. The garage would include 155 spaces for public parking. Garage access is from S. El Molino Avenue.
4. **A plaza (40' x 40')** for public use on S. El Molino Avenue.
5. Provide a **pedestrian paseo** linking the Arcade Lane building and its retail shops to the east with the proposed new retail development and S. El Molino Avenue to the west.

Public Art Program

The developer has chosen to participate with a public art component for this project and an application with a preliminary proposal has been submitted. Details of the public art component shall be provided by the developer, pursuant to the public art requirements, for Final Design Review.

Site Characteristics

The site is 1.36 acres (57,762 square feet). It is located in the Central District (CD-5/AD-2) on the southeast corner of E. Colorado Boulevard and S. El Molino Avenue. It is currently developed with a two-story commercial building of 60,000 square feet and a surface parking lot. The building on the site is not identified as historically significant in the Central District Historic Resources Survey of 2004. The site is adjacent to the Playhouse National Register historic district, and is located across the street on from the landmark Pasadena Playhouse on S. El Molino Avenue and adjacent to Arcade Lane on its eastern edge.

Proposed Building

The proposed office building is five stories with ground-floor retail (Attachment A: Plans and Elevations). It is 75 feet in height at the northern portion of the site on E. Colorado Boulevard and steps down to its lowest height of 22 feet in the middle of the block. It is designed with contrasting traditional and more contemporary architectural features with a ground-floor level that is 17 feet in height. The exterior building materials are preliminarily proposed as pre-cast

concrete panels; large areas of glazing, offset by punched window openings with traditional ground-floor retail storefronts.

The site plan includes an east/west oriented pedestrian paseo in the middle of the site on El Molino. The covered paseo connects to the Arcade Lane retail shops through a new opening that would be created in the Arcade Lane building's western wall. The paseo is intended to create a retail node between the new building and Arcade Lane and to provide elevator access to upper-story office space and to the subterranean parking garage. The project also proposes a 40-foot by 40-foot plaza on S. El Molino Avenue. It would be landscaped and available for public use and pedestrian access to the new retail shops. The building has setbacks that range from five to 25 feet along S. El Molino Avenue. The purpose of these setbacks is to promote publicly accessible outdoor spaces and to provide a wider sidewalk area to accommodate pedestrians for special events. Vehicles access the six-level subterranean parking garage from a driveway on southern edge of the site on El Molino Ave.

Height and Floor-Area Ratio

The building exceeds the maximum allowable height in two of the three height districts on the site. Specifically, a portion of the fourth and fifth floors would exceed the 50 foot height limit by 25 feet in the middle portion of the site; and the third floor would exceed the 35 foot height limit by 9 feet in the rear portion of the site. These portions of the building are located near the interior of the building footprint and away from the street edges.

The site's unique condition, being located in three different height districts and two different Floor-Area Ratio districts, was a determinate factor in the building's current configuration. These conditions create difficulty in designing a large office building that achieves efficient circulation, varied massing, a site plan with adequate ground level open space and, ultimately, an economically feasible project. These conditions figured in the decision of the City Council to approve, a Floor-Area Ratio increase of 10 percent to this project. On the subject site, the maximum allowable floor area is 145,299 square feet. The ten percent increase in floor area, afforded this project, is equivalent to 14,530 square feet.

Design Analysis

The proposed project is based on a comprehensive circulation plan that combines new commercial development with public amenities. The height of the building articulates in response to the dictates set forth by conjoining zoning height overlay districts. The mass of the building, generally, modulates as it reacts to key points of public circulation or proximity to existing lower-scale buildings and to create greater physical separation from the Pasadena Playhouse. The design team has continued to pursue height modulation of the structure overall and have reduced the height from five to four floors of the southern portion of the building at the urging of the Design Commission and as a response to lower scale buildings in this vicinity. The proposed pedestrian paseo,

public plaza, and storefront retail development integrate the project with the commercial streetscape and help to strengthen pedestrian connections within the district. A further study of the building edge condition along El Molino was requested by the Design Commission and the architects have introduced glazed pavilions that encroach upon the public plaza area of the project to address the concerns of the commissioners and further engage pedestrian circulation at this location. Additionally, the corner entry feature of the building at Colorado and El Molino has been reduced in height to two stories to similarly respond to comments by the Design Commissioners that a stepped building height at this location could effectively soften the mass of structure and create a more visually engaging, pedestrian friendly building elevation.

An alternative design could have more strictly conformed to the standard height and floor area regulations of the Zoning Code and still have included the majority of the proposed square footage. However, the building would have had large, simple massing and long, unbroken facades. The five-story height and varied massing of the proposed building helps to break-down the overall mass to better insure the new structure does not overpower existing development in the vicinity of the project. The neighborhood includes an eclectic mix of buildings of different heights, ages, and architectural character. Notable mid-rise buildings in the vicinity are Trio Apartments (five stories), Archstone apartments (five stories), historic Lloyd's Bank building (eight stories), and the 1930 annex of the Pasadena Playhouse (80 feet).

While the architectural design premise or aesthetic logic of the project approved by council appeared to have been the juxtaposition of traditional and more contemporary architectural features, e.g., punched window details versus curtain-wall glazing effects, the current version resolves the mass of the building more successfully by generally lightening the building with additional glazing as it rises from the more traditional pedestrian level. The more contemporary-styled components of the building design (portions of the building that are extensively glazed) respond and give focus to the location of the main public entry and circulation hubs, but as the corner glass feature on Colorado and El Molino does not afford public entry to the structure, the highlighting of this area seems confusing. Insuring that the corner design of the building is a prominent feature is certainly an architectural gesture which must be closely considered, but without the public access point, generally indicated by such a notable architectural feature, the corner location loses the impact that would be gained from the activation afforded by pedestrian circulation. The corresponding location for the contemporary curtain wall feature is above the pedestrian paseo which leads to the Arcade Building on the El Molino elevation and highlights pedestrian access to the office tower and subterranean parking structure for the project. Notably, the architects have made several additional interior circulation studies and have included a new pedestrian entry to the building on the eastern edge of the Colorado Boulevard elevation which leads to the central elevator lobby and pedestrian paseo.

Building Mass Reduction & Increased Modulation

In response to comments from the public, the design team and developer have worked hard and cooperatively with staff to break-down the apparent mass of the structure through shifts in mass, further modulation, and changes in building materiality. To this end, the proposed design has been modified to reduce the overall mass of the structure by removing the central building module on EL Molino and reducing the height of the flanking, lower scaled building modules or pods to the north and south. This transfer in massing maintains the existing square footage for the building by adding the mass to the taller rear building component. This reallocation of mass has the important effect of creating a much larger public plaza opposing the Pasadena Playhouse which could be used for public events and create a vibrant pedestrian circulation zone. This now larger, more open plaza goes further toward respecting the importance of the Playhouse's critical street presence on El Molino and supports objectives in the Central District Specific Plan—for the Playhouse District—to “[p]rovide for the functional and visual integration of building[s]...and ‘outdoor rooms’ such as plazas, fore-courts, interior courtyards, and passages.” In addition, establishing an architectural response to the intersection of these reduced, low-scaled building modules on El Molino (west elevation) and the larger mass of the office tower to the rear continue to require greater study to respond to this architectural condition.

Conclusion

This project provides a design that seeks to form a contextual link to this neighborhood, while creating vibrant pedestrian circulation, public parking, and much needed economic development. The design architects have made great strides in redesigning this structure to respond to the site conditions at this location. The height differentiations of the building modules, the introduction of a much larger open-air plaza space and the modulation of the structure, increased glazing, structural referencing on the facades and a preliminary resolution of the tower element as a whole, have significantly improved from the previous iterations. Further close study of the building's design details and ways the structure can connect to the context of older buildings in the vicinity will help to drive this project successfully forward.

Ultimately, finessing the aesthetics of the design and refining the emblematic features of the building and the overall mass, glazing components and materiality on each elevation will be critically important in insuring this building's place within the Playhouse District.