

ATTACHMENT A

SPECIFIC FINDINGS FOR CONCEPT DESIGN REVIEW

1. *The project, upon implementation of the conditions of approval, will comply with the purposes of design review, the design-related goals and policies of the Land Use Element of the General Plan, the Design Guidelines in the 2022 East Colorado Specific Plan & the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial & Multi-Family Residential Districts.*

The site is designated as Medium Mixed Use in the General Plan. This designation is intended to support the development of multi-story buildings with a variety of commercial and residential uses that are compatible. The staff report provides a detailed listing of the goals and policies with which this project complies, along with Guiding Principals 1, 3, and 6. The project provides a land use that will enhance the local economy by providing space for research and development of new technologies in close proximity to Caltech and PCC where the city has identified the space is needed. The use will serve local and regional needs, provide job opportunities and capture local spending.

The site is located within the East Colorado Specific Plan and is within the EC-MU-N (East Colorado Mixed-Use Neighborhood) zoning district. The purpose of which is to promote the development of a mixed-use, pedestrian friendly neighborhood with a broad range of uses including retail, commercial, office and multi-family along with mixed use projects. The site is located within the Mid-City Innovation area. The Mid-City Subarea extends along Colorado Boulevard and Green Street between Hill Avenue and Wilson Avenue, the western edge of the ECSP area and adjacent to the Central District Specific Plan boundary. Mid-City is commercially focused and includes a range of existing uses including local- and community scale retail, neighborhood services, churches, hotels, and private and government offices. Green Street is characterized by a combination of general office, retail, and medical office uses, in addition to government and PCC-related uses east of Michigan Avenue, including the State of California Employment Development Department and the PCC Child Development Center. Caltech, another institutional anchor located a quarter-mile to the south of the ECSP area, also contributes to the demand for office and R&D uses in the area. Goal 8 of the Mid-City Innovation District is noted as “A cohesive mixed-use district with a strong sense of place and supportive land uses that takes advantage of close proximity to PCC, Caltech, and South Lake”. The project involves construction of a four-story, 93,539-square-foot research & development project that will include 260 at-grade and subterranean parking spaces. The project is a by-right use and meets all applicable development standards of the Zoning Code, including those of the East Colorado Specific Plan.

The purpose of Design Review is to “implement urban design goals and policies and the Citywide design principles in the General Plan and to apply the City’s adopted design guidelines to Design Review”. The project was evaluated for adherence to a number of design guidelines and policies that are contained within the Land Use Element of the General Plan, the 2022 East Colorado Specific Plan and the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-Family Residential Districts. The full analysis of this work is contained in the Design Commission staff reports that are attached to this report and dated December 9, 2025 and January 27, 2026. Also, at Attachment “L” to this report are the citywide design principles and adopted design guidelines that staff identified as the applicable guidelines through the Preliminary Consultation application.

As an overview, the project design features a high degree of integration with the pedestrian experience through its orientation in relation to the street and a pedestrian access points along Green Street. The modulation and articulated stepped back massing of the proposed development includes a height and volume distribution that is respectful to the surrounding built context, reads as a new development precedent, and is in keeping with the applicable design guidelines. The architectural detailing of the building expresses a contemporary development that maintains a high quality of materials and features including flat roofs, a rational grid configuration with high levels of transparency that respond to the solar orientation of each façade, and a combination of concrete skim coat, EIFS with stucco finish, metal panels and transparent and spandrel glazing. The proposed design incorporates high quality materials and a landscape design that softens the development with a variety of plantings along its edges. All of these features will ensure consistency with the purposes of design review, including encouraging new structures that show creativity and imagination and add distinction, interest, and variety to the community, promoting architectural excellence, reflecting the values of the community, and ensuring that new landscaping provides a visually pleasing setting. Further, the project is consistent with Design Review Purpose 17.61.030.A.2 – environmentally sustainable structures. The project must meet all applicable standards related to energy and sustainability features contained in the adopted Building Code and those required by the City's Climate Action Plan.

The proposed design is inspired by a number of design precedents of the same style and is consistent within the immediate and larger context due to its proximity to East Colorado Boulevard, PCC, and Caltech and similar newer and older commercial, office, and institutional buildings of various architectural styles. This will ensure consistency with design guidelines that promote contextual compatibility, enhancement of the surrounding environment, support and avoidance nostalgic misrepresentations that may confuse the relationships among structures over time (e.g., General Plan Land Use Element policies 4.11, 7.2, 7.3, 25.4; East Colorado Specific Plan policies 5.a, 5.b, 6.b, 6.c).

The nearest adjacent parcel, which is developed with a church and school, has improvements that are located 26 feet at the closest point to the proposed project and 295 feet at the furthest point. The recommended conditions of approval for the project will further ensure compatibility by requiring additional study of the mechanical screening and fourth-floor step-back from the south façade in an effort to reduce the perceived height of the building adjacent to the neighboring school/church parcel.

Further, the project is consistent with additional applicable design guidelines as identified in Attachment L, for example:

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

- 7.1 – The project uses exterior materials that exhibit permanence and minimize maintenance concerns.
- 10.7 – Landscaping will be required, through Final Design Review, to demonstrate sustainability.
- 23.3 – Appropriate landscaped setbacks, consistent with Zoning Code requirements, are provided.

East Colorado Boulevard Specific Plan

- 6.d – Tree planting, native landscaping and required stormwater capture will ensure urban greening.

Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial & Multi-Family Residential Districts

- 11.1, 11.2 and 11.4 – The contemporary design is clear, consistent and logical, follows a set of rules established by the designer, and all related features strongly relate to the building's design concept.
- 13. – The building's materials are high-quality and durable and will be further evaluated in detail during Final Design Review.
- 14.1 & 14.3 – Windows are organized into a clear pattern that is consistent with the architectural language chosen for the project and sized to be consistent with the proposed use of the building and each façade's solar orientation.
- 18 – The landscape responds to Pasadena climate and facilitates sustainable water use and drainage strategies.