



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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March 1, 2018

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve an Addendum to the Downtown Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIRA-02-17), and approve a Site Plan Review (SPR17-068) for 400 residential units, 23,207 square feet of new non-residential space at the ground floor and second level, plus the restoration and reuse of a 9,600-square-foot designated Historic Landmark building (Acres of Books), with a total of 582 parking spaces, on a 2.066-acre (90,000-square-foot) site located within the Downtown Plan (PD-30). (District 2)

APPLICANT: Cliff Ratkovich of Ratkovich Properties for Broadway Block, LLC
2465 Campus Drive, 3rd Floor
Irvine, CA 92612
(Application No. 1708-10)

DISCUSSION

Project Site

The project, referred to as "Broadway Block," will develop the site bounded by Long Beach Boulevard to the west, 3rd Street to the north, Broadway to the south, and Alamo Court (a named alley) to the east (Exhibit A – Project Location and Vicinity Map). The project site makes up approximately the western two-thirds of the city block between Long Beach Boulevard and Elm Avenue.

The project site currently is occupied by two surface parking lots and a vacant designated historic landmark building that was the location of Bertrand Smith's Acres of Books, at 240 Long Beach Boulevard. The eastern portion of the block is separated from the western portion (the project site) by Alamo Court. The eastern portion of the block is occupied by an arts-focused community center and associated parking lot on its northern quarter, and a four-story residential development by developer CityVentures currently is under construction on the southern three-quarters. Uses to the north of the project site include the Downtown Long Beach Post Office directly north at 300 Long Beach Boulevard, a mix of commercial retail, restaurant, and personal services northwest, and commercial retail, office, and residential uses to the northeast. Beyond Elm Avenue to the east are residential and commercial retail uses. Directly south of the project site is a Bank of America, a parking garage, and commercial office uses. A five-story residential

building, and the 12-story Pacific Tower historic landmark building are across Long Beach Boulevard to the west. Further to the south at 125 Long Beach Boulevard, a 7-story mixed use building with 208 residential units is in the entitlement process. Additional regional access to the project site is provided by the 1st Street station, located approximately 175 feet south of the site, of the Metro Blue Line station, which travels to and from downtown Los Angeles. The site also is served by several bus lines, and is bounded by two streets with dedicated cycle tracks (Broadway and 3rd Street).

The project site area is just over two acres (90,000 square feet). It contains two large underutilized surface parking lots and the Acres of Books building. The properties that make up the project site were formerly owned by the Redevelopment Agency, and the sale of these properties to the developer was finalized by the Successor Agency in June 2016.

Project Description

The applicant proposes to build 400 residential units, and 23,207 square feet of new ground floor and second level non-residential space (Exhibit B – Plans, Photos, and Renderings). The proposed project consists of a 23-story high-rise tower on the northern portion of the site (North Tower) and a 7-story mid-rise building on the southern portion of the site (South Building). The North Tower will include 197 residential units and 10,579 square feet of non-residential uses, while the South Building will include 203 residential units and 12,628 square feet of non-residential uses. Fourteen of the residential units will be affordable housing units, with seven reserved for residents at 80% of area median income (AMI), and the other seven reserved for residents at 120% AMI. The non-residential uses will consist of retail, restaurant, creative/flex office, a bicycle-oriented space (“Velo Lounge”) and spaces currently proposed to be programmed by the California State University, Long Beach. In the central portion of the site, the existing Bertrand Smith’s Acres of Books building will be preserved by retaining many of its character-defining features and materials. The project will remove the rear portion of the building, replacing it with new construction following the original scale and massing of the extant building. In addition, the front portion of the building will be deconstructed and stored off-site, with the concrete façade to remain and be protected in place throughout construction. The front portion of the building will then be reconstructed using original materials. The restored Acres of Books building will include 3,400 square feet of restaurant uses and 6,200 square feet of market/food hall uses. The project will add 582 parking spaces through the construction of above grade and subterranean parking lots.

The project includes a series of architecturally-themed interior courtyards, paseos and patios between the project buildings. From south to north, the site is provided with interior courtyard spaces including the Golden Room, Academic Court, Fountain Court and North Court. Maple Way provides a through-block east-west pedestrian paseo, and will be dedicated for public use.

The South Building has the largest footprint, and is located at the southern edge of the site, with the building form rising from east to west and north to south to a pyramid-shaped summit at the corner of Long Beach Boulevard and Broadway. This building, primarily

covered in smooth white plaster, is primarily oriented toward the corner of Long Beach Boulevard and Broadway and has its main architectural presence facing that intersection. It comes to a maximum height of 108.9 feet above grade at the southwest corner of the site nearest the Metro Blue Line station, and tapers in a context-sensitive manner to lower heights moving east along Broadway away from the major transit stop and north up Long Beach Boulevard towards the Acres of Books building.

The North Tower, proposed at the northern edge of the site, has a smaller footprint and will reach a maximum height of 261.2 feet. The tower features a full glass curtain wall system, with architectural metal accents. The tower contains rooftop amenities making up its common residential open space, with additional project-wide residential amenities located on a lower deck between the tower and mid-rise. Both buildings contain a mix of residential unit sizes from approximately 630 to 1,280 square feet spread among studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom units. All residential units are located above the ground floor, with commercial and flex spaces located on the ground and second floors.

Vehicular access to the project site will be provided on Alamo Court, near the intersection with Broadway. Residential parking is provided off of the first driveway from Broadway via a ramp that leads directly to the two levels of subterranean parking structure. Commercial visitors and residential guests are provided access through a second driveway on Alamo Court, leading to the smaller at-grade and mezzanine-level parking structure. A third entrance off the alley will provide valet parking in the smaller parking structure; the valet station here will serve the dual purpose of maintaining a human presence in the alley to make it friendlier and more secure for all users.

A total of 500 parking spaces are required by code for this project, and 582 spaces will be provided. 81 of the excess spaces are contained in tandem parking spaces that will be provided to two- and three-bedroom units. 508 spaces are located in two full levels of subterranean parking built underneath nearly the entire project site. An additional 74 spaces are located in a ground-floor and mezzanine-level parking structure tucked into the southeast corner of the project site, east of the 7-story South Building. This smaller parking structure features a valet service, along with the site's loading and trash pickup entrances. Code requires a total of 85 bicycle parking spaces for the project, and a total of 104 bicycle parking spaces are provided.

The project site is located in the Downtown Plan Planned Development District (PD-30), within the Height Incentive Area, a subarea that allows high-rise development. The Height Incentive Area is characterized by mid- and high-rise residential development; high-intensity employment; and various retail, cultural, and entertainment destinations. The project, designed to conform with all applicable development standards of PD-30, is consistent with the level and intensity of development intended for the site by the PD-30 zoning document. The base height limit in the Height Incentive Area is 240 feet, but this may be increased up to 500 feet through the provision of certain incentives. One of the incentives, rehabilitation of a historic structure, is provided by this project, allowing an increase in building height. Correspondingly, the total height of the 23-story North Tower is proposed to be 261.2 feet above grade. None of the other structures in the project approach the 240-foot base height limit by half.

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

March 1, 2018

Page 4 of 6

The Downtown Plan calls for a minimum unit size of 600 square feet, and all units in the project comply with this standard. The Downtown Plan also requires a total of 20 percent site area as common outdoor open space; the proposed project provides 34 percent. For common indoor open space for the residential units, a total of at least 500 square feet is required, and more than four times this amount is provided. Also, the Downtown Plan requires at least 50 percent of residential units to be provided with private outdoor open space of at least 36 square feet, and this requirement is exceeded by the project as well. With regards to Floor Area Ratio (FAR), the Downtown Plan specifies a maximum of 8.0 without incentives, and 11.0 if incentives are provided; the project's total FAR is 7.47. The site is located within General Plan Land Use District No. 7 – Mixed Uses. LUD No. 7 intends for combinations of land uses—including high-density residential—that vitalize sites and give them more importance in the urban structure of the City, and the project is consistent with the intent of LUD No. 7.

Acres of Books Building

The project's architects carefully considered the context for the Acres of Books historic landmark building, ensuring it is not overwhelmed by the proposed adjacent 23-story North Tower and 7-story South Building. The Acres of Books building will retain 10 to 15 feet of space on either side to highlight the building's architectural character and historic significance. Due to the building's state of disrepair and building code and seismic deficiencies, a careful restoration will be made focused on the historic front façade, which will be restored and protected in place throughout project construction. The remainder of the front (western) portion of the Acres of Books building envelope will be disassembled and stored off-site while the parking structure is constructed below, while the rear portion of the building will be removed. The front portion will then be reconstructed using original building materials, and a new structure having the same envelope and historic form as the removed portion of building will be constructed in the same location at the rear. A new structural-framing-and-glass atrium following the historic envelope of the building will separate the two building portions. The restored Acres of Books building, when finished, is proposed to become a 3,400-square-foot restaurant fronting Long Beach Boulevard and a rear 6,200-square-foot "food market" or "food hall" space. The Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) approved a Certificate of Appropriateness on November 13, 2017, for all work related to the Acres of Books building (Exhibit C – Certificate of Appropriateness).

Conclusion

The project, with its high-density residential and mixed-use nature, building heights, and general orientation towards Long Beach Boulevard and 3rd Street, is representative of the type of developments anticipated within the Downtown Plan. The site is an ideal location for this transit-oriented development, as it is well-served by transit and lends itself to multi-modal transportation options. Improving the site with a high-quality, context sensitive mixed-use residential project will rejuvenate the site, contribute new residential units to the downtown housing stock, and provide new retail and commercial destinations, while creating one of the most significant developments in Downtown Long Beach. The overall project package segments the large city block to create human-scaled buildings and

spaces, and creates cohesion across the proposed buildings and along the pedestrian-oriented street frontages. The project will develop a key site in eastern downtown, and will create an iconic development while restoring a designated historic landmark. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the requested Site Plan Review for this project, and certify the EIR Addendum to the Downtown Plan EIR (Exhibit D – Findings and Conditions of Approval).

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

A total of 2,266 notices of public hearing were distributed on February 14, 2018, in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 21.21 of the Zoning Regulations. As of the preparation of this report, no comments or written testimony has been received.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines, this project was analyzed as part of the previously-certified Downtown Plan Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). An EIR Addendum (EIRA-02-17) was prepared for this project. The EIR Addendum analyzed the proposed project in accordance with the Downtown Plan PEIR, and determined that the project will not result in any new significant impacts that exceed those analyzed in the Downtown Plan PEIR with mitigation measures included (Exhibit E – EIR Addendum EIRA-02-17). An addendum to a prior historic assessment of the Acres of Books building was prepared for the project as well. The historic addendum determined that, although the project would have significant and unavoidable impacts to a historic resource and result in an adverse change to the historic building, these impacts have already been analyzed and this finding is consistent with the analysis and conclusions presented in the Downtown Plan PEIR. Thus, the impacts to a historic resource will not be greater than those already analyzed in the Downtown Plan PEIR. Additionally, the development is subject to the Downtown Plan Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) that was adopted with the Downtown Plan PEIR. The MMRP is designed to ensure compliance with adopted mitigation measures during project implementation (Exhibit F – Downtown Plan Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program). For each mitigation measure recommended in the PEIR that applies to the applicant's proposal, specifications are made that identify the action required and the monitoring that must occur. In addition, the party for verifying compliance with individual mitigation measures is identified.

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

March 1, 2018

Page 6 of 6

Respectfully submitted,



LINDA F. TATUM, AICP
PLANNING BUREAU MANAGER



TOM MODICA
INTERIM DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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Attachments:

- Exhibit A – Project Location and Vicinity Map
- Exhibit B – Plans, Photos, and Renderings
- Exhibit C – Certificate of Appropriateness for 240 Long Beach Blvd.
- Exhibit D – Findings and Conditions of Approval
- Exhibit E – Environmental Impact Report Addendum to the Downtown Plan EIR (EIRA-02-17)
- Exhibit F – Downtown Plan Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program