

SITE PLAN REVIEW FINDINGS

636 Locust Avenue

Application No. 2004-11 (SPR20-011)

September 16, 2021

Pursuant to Section 21.25.506 of the Long Beach Municipal Code, the Site Plan Review Committee or the Planning Commission shall not approve a Site Plan Review unless the following findings are made. These findings and staff analysis are presented for consideration, adoption, and incorporation into the record of proceedings:

- 1. THE DESIGN IS HARMONIOUS, CONSISTENT AND COMPLETE WITHIN ITSELF AND IS COMPATIBLE IN DESIGN, CHARACTER, AND SCALE, WITH NEIGHBORING STRUCTURES AND THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH IT IS LOCATED;**

The applicant proposes to build 108 residential units and 1,188 square feet of new ground-level commercial space (see project plans in App. No. 2004-11) within one new mixed-use structure (seven-stories, 88-feet-6-inches in height). The project will include 135 parking spaces through the construction of at-grade, above grade, and subterranean parking. Thirty-two (32) bicycle parking spaces would be provided on the ground floor of the project.

The project site is bounded by Seventh Street to the north and Locust Avenue to the west. The alley, Waite Court, borders the eastern property line.

The proposed project would replace a former Firestone Auto Care facility with a seven-story, mid-rise, mixed use building. The project's architecture incorporates high-quality exterior building materials and architectural elements that vary and yet are complementary. The building materials and architectural design treatments, including balconies, material changes and plane breaks to provide articulation along the street-facing elevations. The interior and alley elevations maintain cohesiveness with the use of material variations. Four levels of parking are integrated into the building with two levels of subterranean and two levels above ground. High-quality and thoughtful materials are used throughout the building.

The scale of the mid-rise building is well within the height limit for this area of PD-30, and the project would be compatible with both the mix uses and the variable scale found in surrounding area, including the Oropeza Elementary School and Renaissance High School for the Arts located across 7th Street to the north, a surface parking lot, the Molina Healthcare facility, and El Economico, a newspaper publisher to the west across Locust Avenue, commercial-retail businesses to the east, across the alley (Waite Court) and a two-story residential building immediately to the south of the subject site. The existing auto service building is built to the property line. The project is designed at the same zero-foot setback with the enclosed parking garage on levels one and two, so no openings will face the existing two-story building, and the upper floors will be setback 10-feet to

provide a buffer. There is open space at the podium level (floor 3) that will include landscaping and privacy screening. Residential balconies and a courtyard amenity deck contribute to add depth and textural form along the frontages. The ground floor retail areas would feature a storefront window system with canopies. All windows will have recessed features to provide depth to the elevations as required in the PD-30 Plan. This level of design quality and architectural expression is consistent with the goals of the Downtown Plan for high-quality building design and architecture.

A total of 135 parking spaces are required for this project per the PD-30 Plan requirements. This includes one space per unit (108 spaces) and guest parking at a rate of one space per each four dwelling units (27 spaces). The PD-30 Plan exempts parking for retail, restaurants, bar areas containing less than 6,000 square feet. The project contains 1,188 square feet of commercial space, which is exempt from parking. The project proposes the 135 parking spaces integrated into the building in at-grade, above-grade, and subterranean configurations.

The site is served by a variety of multi-modal, local, and regional transportation options. It has access from the Interstate-710 (I-710) freeway, which travels north-south with an off-ramp at 6th Street, and an on-ramp that can be accessed via 7th Street. As of June 2021, Long Beach Transit offers a modified bus schedule that operates four bus routes along 7th Street. Additional regional access is provided by the Metro A line, which travels to and from downtown Los Angeles and the greater Los Angeles County area, with the 5th Street Station at Long Beach Boulevard, between 4th and 5th Street, approximately 500 feet southeast of the project site.

The Project site is located in the Height Incentive Area of the Downtown Planned Development District (PD-30). Within the Height Incentive Area, buildings are permitted to be 240 feet in height and a FAR of 8.0, or 500 feet in height and a FAR of 11.0 with certain sustainability features incorporated into the building's design. At an FAR of 3.6:1, the project proposed is below the maximum FAR limits and would conform to the PD-30 height and FAR development standards.

The PD-30 Height Incentive Area is a subarea 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 envisioned for the site by the PD-30 Downtown Plan.

The project is compatible in design, character, and scale with its surroundings, which include the adjacent mid-rise mix of uses in the project vicinity. The incorporation of varying design treatments breaks up the massing and presence of the structure while enhancing the pedestrian environment.

2. THE DESIGN CONFORMS TO ANY APPLICABLE SPECIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES ADOPTED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION OR SPECIFIC PLAN REQUIREMENTS, SUCH AS THE DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR R-3 AND R-4 MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT, THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES, PD GUIDELINES OR THE GENERAL PLAN;

The project site is located in the Downtown Plan Planned Development District (PD-30) and conforms to the special design guidelines outlined in Chapter 4 of that document. These guidelines set standards for build-to lines, street walls, pedestrian paseos, form and massing, materials and finish, and overall quality of development.

Pedestrian orientation is achieved through the building's zero (0) setback along Locust Avenue and 7th Street frontages. Also, the proposed placement of active street-level uses within the commercial and lobby spaces would facilitate an enhanced pedestrian environment. These areas feature large glass storefront systems and elevated floor-to-ceiling heights to define the street and public realm. In addition, direct access to ground level units from Locust Avenue further activates and enhances the streetscape.

The project design, as discussed above, consists of high-quality architecture and materials choices, and complies with the requirements of the design guidelines. The project establishes a pedestrian-friendly environment. The single building has a cohesive design theme and will use quality, durable materials. Visual relief is provided on upper levels of the building with the incorporation of balcony designs and an outdoor amenity deck. The project follows the Downtown Plan's recommended materials palette by building type and uses materials and color to create variation in building form and massing. The building exhibits the most detail at ground levels and makes a positive contribution to the streetscape by directly addressing Locust Avenue and 7th Street with quality architectural elevations on each frontage.

The site is located within the Downtown (DT) General Plan Land Use PlaceType Downtown, which is subject to compliance with the development standards for the PD-30 document. The PD-30 Planned Development District was adopted by City Council in January 2012. The PD-30 area is divided into a Downtown Plan area and a Downtown Neighborhood Overlay district. The project site is located in the height incentive area of the Downtown Plan area, which intends for a combination of land uses including retail, offices, and higher density residences. As noted above, the project site is located within a transit-rich environment. The proposed mixed-use project is consistent with the intent of the district and the objective to develop a downtown that emphasizes a quality physical environment, a pedestrian focus, and quality architecture. The project includes residential units incorporating

a mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom units to accommodate a variety of household sizes consistent with adopted Housing Element goals and objectives. The additional housing units will contribute to the reduction of the state-wide housing shortage.¹

The application (App. No. 2004-11) filed prior to March 6, 2021, which is the effective date of the inclusionary housing ordinance (ORD-21-0006). Therefore, this project is not subject to the provisions of the inclusionary housing ordinance.

3. THE DESIGN WILL NOT REMOVE SIGNIFICANT MATURE TREES OR STREET TREES UNLESS NO ALTERNATIVE DESIGN IS POSSIBLE;

The site is currently developed with a former Firestone Auto Care Facility. The site has minimal ornamental vegetation consisting of planters with turf and two palm trees.

As conditioned, street trees abutting the site shall be in conformance with the amount and species outlined in the PD-30 landscaping provisions and pursuant to Section 21.42.050 of the City Municipal Code. The installation of new street trees consistent with applicable standards will provide a continuous perimeter of broad, leafy shade canopy trees around and throughout the project site.

4. THERE IS AN ESSENTIAL NEXUS BETWEEN THE PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT REQUIREMENTS ESTABLISHED BY THIS ORDINANCE AND THE LIKELY IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT; AND

Improvements to the public right-of-way adjacent to the project site will include dedications and easements required by the Long Beach Municipal Code. Conditions of approval include the construction of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant sidewalks, curbs, intersection improvements adjacent to the project, and street trees adjacent to the project site (see 2004-05 conditions of approval).

The widened alleys will be used as the vehicular access to the proposed parking structure. The required dedication would widen the alley increasing the existing capacity to a 20-foot-wide alley (Waite Court). This widening is key for providing vehicular access to the parking facilities for the building.

It is anticipated that street trees and associated irrigation systems will be installed along the Locust Avenue and 7th Street frontages adjacent to the Project which will soften the street-side pedestrian experience.

¹ The application (App. No. 2005-04) was filed on April 16, 2020 prior to March 6, 2021, which is the effective date of the inclusionary housing ordinance (ORD-21-0006). Therefore, this project is not subject to the provisions of the inclusionary housing ordinance.

5. THE PROJECT CONFORMS WITH ALL REQUIREMENTS SET FORTH IN CHAPTER 21.64 (TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT), WHICH REQUIREMENTS ARE SUMMARIZED IN TABLE 25 1 AS FOLLOWS:

Table 25-1
Transportation Demand Management Ordinance Requirements

TDM Requirements	New Nonresidential Development		
	25,000+ Square Feet	50,000+ Square Feet	100,000+ Square Feet
Transportation Information Area	♦	♦	♦
Preferential carpool/vanpool parking		♦	♦
Parking designed to admit vanpools		♦	♦
Bicycle parking		♦	♦
Carpool/vanpool loading zones			♦
Efficient pedestrian access			♦
Bus stop improvements			♦
Safe bike access from street to bike parking			♦
Transit review	For all residential and nonresidential projects subject to EIR		

The project contains 1,188 square feet of commercial floor area which is less than the first tier of 25,000 square feet of new non-residential development that would require implementation of Transportation Demand Management requirements.

6. THE APPROVAL IS CONSISTENT WITH THE GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT, AS LISTED IN SECTION 21.45.400.

The project will comply with green building standards for private development, as per the requirements of Section 21.45.400. The project design does not require additional green building project design features for development incentives. As conditioned and in conformance with Section 21.45.400, the project would meet the intent of LEED at the Certified Level.

Additionally, bicycle parking is provided, the rooftop is designed for solar readiness, and the trash collection areas will feature a designated area for recyclable materials. Therefore, the project would be in conformance with the Green Building Standards outlined for public and private development, as listed in Section 21.45.400 of the Long Beach Municipal Code.