



November 11, 2009

Via E-Mail and Hand Delivery

Mayor Bill Bogaard
Members of the City Council
City of Pasadena
100 North Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, California 91109

Re: Playhouse Plaza Project

Dear Mayor Bogaard and Members of the City Council:

The West Pasadena Residents' Association (WPRAs) Board of Directors has been following closely the public review process for the Playhouse Plaza Project. At the WPRAs Board meeting on November 4, 2009 Directors discussed the current status of the project and whether the Board should take a formal position in anticipation of the City Council's consideration of the Project on November 16, 2009.

The WPRAs board believes that the proposed office building, just one block from residences and directly across the street from the historic Pasadena Playhouse, is symptomatic of an unsettling development trend in the City of Pasadena, and we urge the City Council to carefully consider the impacts it will have on the city and the adjacent neighborhood.

While the Project might be commendable by certain standards and in another place, the Board believes that the Project would overwhelm the street and the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District due to its size. We believe that there would be significant impacts on the properties in this National Register-listed historic district, including the traffic impacts on two segments of El Molino Avenue that could not be mitigated. As currently proposed, this office complex's design makes minimal effort to relate to its historic setting. The proposed scale, more than 160,000 square feet, and five stories in height does not respect, emulate or relate in any way to the adjacent, small scale, well-articulated buildings.

Many west Pasadena residents, as well as others throughout the city of Pasadena, who are taking part in the General Plan Update process, have expressed concern about the size and density of recent developments in our city. Moreover, the WPRAs Board is concerned that city staff is recommending that the applicant be awarded a 10% density bonus which the applicant is otherwise not entitled to under current city plans and ordinances. The Board also notes that your own Planning Commission has unanimously advised against the current iteration of the Project.

The Playhouse Plaza project does not comply with the General Plan guiding principle that new construction should harmonize with existing historic fabric. And, it does not comply with the goals described in the City's Central District Specific Plan that requires new buildings to

WEST PASADENA RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
POST OFFICE BOX 50252 • PASADENA, CA 91115

“respect and embrace their surroundings” and “provide for new development consistent with the scale, density and urban design features of the historic district.”

The WPRA supports reasonable and thoughtful development. We recognize that continued business development is necessary for the economic vitality of our city. However, this project as currently proposed, does not comply with the letter or the spirit of our planning documents and ordinances. We urge the City Council to exercise its discretion to insist that the project be changed to comply with such.

Sincerely,

Audrey O’Kelley, President

Cc: Michael Beck
Richard Bruckner