

Colorado Boulevard Redevelopment Plan Goes To City

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The old Pasadena Manor senior home at Colorado Boulevard and Mentor Avenue, is about to become a chic boutique hotel-back to its roots as the Hotel Constance in the 1920's. (SGVN/Staff Photo by Walt Mancini)

PASADENA - Plans to restore the 1926 Constance Hotel and replace small businesses lining the 900 block of East Colorado Boulevard with new stores, restaurants and offices have started through the city process.

The development's first phase calls for the historic eight-story building - most recently the Pasadena Manor retirement home - on the southwest corner of Colorado and Mentor Avenue to be renovated into an upscale 114-room boutique-style hotel, with five residential condominiums.

Phase II would add a new 42-room luxury hotel building at the rear, an adjacent 20,000- to 25,000-square-foot public plaza and the first part of an underground parking garage that eventually would have 653 spaces.

Thirdly, a new seven-story office building would house the Bank of America, anchoring a block of new two-story stores and offices.

"I'm saying, how fast can this get done!" said Gina Tleel, executive director of the South Lake Business Association. "It's definitely going to be a plus for the site, all the elements our district is looking for - open space and mixed use, retail and restaurants and parking."

Although it's a phased-in project, Tleel said it will "inject energy into that block ... and send a signal to locals and tourists that there's something happening here. We're very excited."

There's no exact time-line as the plans start through the city, said Ed Blumenthal, spokesman for developer Arcadia-based Park Place Commercial, in partnership with Singpoli Pacifica.

"Everyone wishes they knew," Blumenthal said, adding that Pasadena's planning process is long and thorough.

"That's not a negative," Blumenthal said. "With the sheer magnitude of the location on Colorado Boulevard, the city appropriately expects a strong look by all parties," including traffic and environmental studies.

"I think everyone has understood there's going to be an extended entitlement process, it's not something either we or the city want to see rushed into," he said. "Given the premier location at Lake (Avenue) and Colorado is cause for due care that the end product is something the city and the owners are going to be proud of."

John Poindexter, the city's planning division manager, said the project, including the hotel, would bring more tourist and pedestrian activity to the neighborhood on the fringe of both the Playhouse and South Lake districts.

Designs are still in the preliminary stage, Poindexter said.

"We haven't gotten to the point of paying a lot of attention to the (design) detail, we know it's going to change significantly when it's reviewed," Poindexter said. "And it's clear a project of this magnitude will require



Architecture details on the old Pasadena Manor senior home at Colorado Boulevard and Mentor Avenue. (SGVN/Staff Photo by Walt Mancini)

design review."

Erlinda Romo, executive director of the Playhouse District, said a restored Constance Hotel - "a jewel of a building" - will be a definite plus for the neighborhood.

"It's a great use," Romo said.

Ideally, she said, some of the long-time small businesses that will be displaced, including Taste of Bangkok restaurant, will be able to return.

Richard McDonald, an attorney working on the project, said he hopes work on the first phase will start by the end of the year, and that it will give the area a new, distinct identity.