

PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM NO. I.1
03/18/2025

SUBJECT: Design Review for Fire Station 94

DEPARTMENT: Community Development

STAFF: Erik Nolthenius, Planning Manager
Miguel Contreras, Associate Planner

TITLE/RECOMMENDATION

An application for Design Review (DR 24-013) to construct a new 8,137 square foot, two-story fire station, including two apparatus bays, living areas, and associated site improvements, on a 13,427 square foot parcel located at 739 First Street (APN 013-091-019).

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. 25-004, approving DR 24-013, subject to certain findings and conditions.

The project qualifies as a Class 32 categorical exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15332 (In Fill Development Projects), insomuch as the proposed fire station is consistent with the applicable General Plan designation, as well as with the applicable zoning designation and regulations, is proposed on a project site less than 5-acres in size, has no value as habitat for endangered species, would not result in significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality, and can be adequately served by all utilities and public services.

OWNER/APPLICANT

Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (CCCFPD)

GENERAL PLAN

Downtown Specific Plan (DSP)

ZONING/SURROUNDING LAND USES

Downtown Core (DC)

Surrounding Land Uses

North: Brentwood Veterans Memorial Building

East: First Street, BAC Community Bank, Contra Costa County First 5

South: First Street Plaza

West: Diablo Way, public parking, commercial building



PREVIOUS ACTION(S)

N/A

BACKGROUND

The proposed project site is a single parcel owned by the CCCFPD, with frontage along First Street, just south of Maple Street. It is the same location where Brentwood's original fire station stood. The original station, according to the CCCFPD, was the Brentwood Fire Protection District's headquarters starting in 1929. The original station was out of service from 2014 until it was ultimately demolished in 2022 to prepare for construction of the proposed fire station.

The Downtown Specific Plan was adopted on November 16, 2005, and subsequently amended in 2014, 2016, and 2017. The project site is located within the Downtown Core zoning district, which allows fire stations as a principally permitted use.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant, the CCCFPD, requests approval of a Design Review (DR 24-013) application to construct a new fire station within the Downtown Core zoning district, located at 739 First Street. The proposed design of the project is the only matter

before the Planning Commission, given that the zoning for the site allows fire stations as a principally permitted use.

The proposed plans include an approximate 8,137 square foot two-story building (with two apparatus bays), nine on-site parking spaces, landscaping, storm water treatment areas, a solid waste enclosure, lighting, and utilities. The apparatus bays will house a Type I engine and Type III engine, but no ladder trucks



Type I Engine



Type II Engine

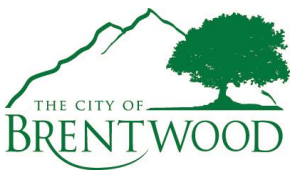
Fire engines would only enter the site from Diablo Way, along the rear property line, and exit onto First Street. Pedestrian access would be from First Street. The proposed plans depict nine on-site parking spaces for CCCFPD employees; including one handicap accessible space. The proposed solid waste enclosure would be located along, and serviced from, Diablo Way.

ANALYSIS

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY – DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN (DSP)

The subject site has a General Plan land use designation of DSP. The intent of the DSP is to "...guide growth and change in Downtown to ensure it evolves to embody the community's vision for a vibrant, active, and beautiful City district that continues to play an essential role in the daily lives of the City's residents. In recognition of regional growth and Brentwood's burgeoning population, the Plan is established to preserve Downtown's role as an indispensable hub for the types of services, conveniences, experiences, and lifestyle choices that are not found elsewhere within the City and are fundamental to the long-term health of the Brentwood community..."

Staff reviewed the goals, policies, and actions in the General Plan, and determined that this project, as proposed, is consistent. Some of the more notable consistencies include:

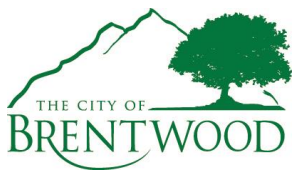


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General Plan provision	Analysis
Goal CSF 1: Provide high quality community services and facilities to all residents, businesses, and visitors in Brentwood.	The City of Brentwood does not offer fire service and looks to CCCFPD for the provision of such community services and facilities. Approving the design of the proposed fire station would aid CCCFPD in delivering high quality fire protection and emergency medical services and facilities to the Brentwood community.
Policy CSF 4-1: Encourage and support the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District [ECCFPD] and providers of emergency medical services to maintain adequate staff and equipment to provide high quality and responsive fire protection and emergency medical services to existing and future growth in Brentwood.	(Note: ECCFPD annexed into CCCFPD on July 1, 2022.) Approving the design of the proposed fire station would facilitate the construction of a new station at which to house the staff and equipment necessary for the provision of high quality and responsive fire protection and emergency medical services to Brentwood.
Policy CSF 4-2: Encourage, and work cooperatively with, the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District [ECCFPD] and providers of emergency medical services to maintain a three to five minute response time for all emergency response calls within Brentwood.	(Note: ECCFPD annexed into CCCFPD on July 1, 2022.) Approving the design of the proposed fire station will allow for the reopening of the Downtown fire station, aiding CCCFPD in achieving targeted response times for emergency calls in Brentwood.

SPECIFIC PLAN CONSISTENCY

In addition to providing the zoning for the site, the Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) also provides guidance to decision-makers on the City's intentions for this area. Staff has determined that the proposed project is consistent with the applicable plans, goals, and objectives of the DSP, as illustrated in the examples below:



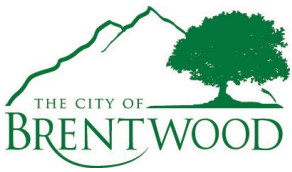
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Downtown Specific Plan provision	Analysis
1.2.d: Civic & Cultural Heart. Enable the continued expansion of Downtown's role as the civic and cultural heart of the City. Identify and protect opportunities for the widest possible range of civic and cultural facilities and public spaces offered in the Downtown. Enhance the performance of the district for festivals, markets, and other significant civic and cultural events.	Approving the proposed design of the fire station would allow for the continued expansion of the Downtown's role as the civic heart of the City by reinstating the place of fire services that were lost to the Downtown when the fire station closed over a decade ago.
1.4.4. Reinforce Downtown's role as the center for civic life in Brentwood by concentrat[ing] all future civic or quasi-civic investment either adjacent to or as near to City Park and the new City Hall as possible.	The proposed fire station is planned to be located one block from City Hall, reinforcing the Downtown's role as the center for civic life in Brentwood.
Strategy (a) to 1.4.4: The City will reserve parcels within the Civic Core for development of civic and quasi civic uses, and allow new public buildings to locate anywhere in the Downtown district while maintaining a balance of civic and non-civic uses for an economically viable Downtown district.	Along with a host of other enumerated civic uses, the Downtown Core also explicitly allows fire stations as permitted uses – inside or outside of the otherwise applicable 65' retail area. (DSP, page 72). Approving the requested design review for this project would realize the intent of this provision.

ZONING CONSISTENCY

As found in the DSP, the subject site is within the Downtown Core zoning district. The proposed fire station is a permitted use within the zoning district, whether it is located inside or outside of the required 65-foot retail area (this particular zoning district requires that the first 65 feet from the street be reserved for retail uses).. The project is designed to meet all applicable commercial development standards as summarized with the following table:

Table 1 Downtown Core Standards – Non Residential



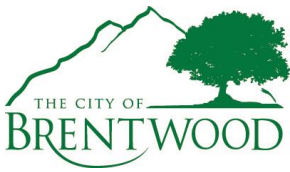
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Standard	Required	Proposed	Compliance
Minimum building height	2 floors and 25 feet	2 floors, 36 feet, 2 inches	Complies
Maximum Building height	48 feet		
Setbacks	0 feet all property lines	0 feet	Complies
Mid-Block Alley Setback	5 feet	5 feet from Diablo Way	
Frontage Coverage	100%	100% including building, landscaping, and retention of an existing accessible paved pathway for the use of the Veteran's Memorial Hall.	Complies
Frontage space between buildings	0 feet	0 feet on southern existing building. Not applicable for building on the north (Veteran's Hall) as it is stepped back and not built at property line	Complies
Parking	0	9 parking spaces (including 1 accessible)	Complies
Bicycle parking	4 parking spaces	4 parking spaces	Complies
Landscaping required	7% of the site's square footage = 939 square feet	1,009 square feet	Complies

DESIGN REVIEW

Site

The project site is located within the Downtown on a single parcel that housed the previous fire station. Access to and from the site would be provided from Diablo Way at the rear of the property, while fire engine ingress and egress would be limited to Diablo Way and First Street, respectively. The site plan includes a turning radius



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diagram depicting how both types of fire engines can adequately enter and exit the site.

The proposed plans depict nine on-site parking spaces accessible from Diablo Way. The DSP does not require on-site parking for non-residential uses; however, the applicant has indicated that they have been provided for the benefit of CCCFPD employees and to reduce impacts on existing parking in the Downtown as much as possible. The applicant is proposing decorative paving, as required by the DSP, to denote the access points on both First Street and Diablo Way.

Prior to demolition of the original fire station in 2014, the entire frontage of the site was dedicated to ingress/egress of the fire engines. Subsequent to demolition of the station, in late 2023 the City striped the frontage to create eight additional on-street diagonal parking spaces along First Street to match those that were already striped. This was done temporarily to provide additional on-street parking in the Downtown, with the understanding that some or all of these spaces would need to be removed once the new fire station moved forward. As proposed, the fire station's egress requires the elimination of five of these eight parking spaces; leaving three additional parking spaces on First Street.

The proposed plans depict a seven-foot high split face masonry (CMU) wall around the site, except for a portion of the northern property line, where the wall will be vertical cement panel. Vehicular ingress to the site will be controlled via a metal sliding gate from Diablo Way.

The proposed solid waste enclosure would be of the same material as the wall and would be located adjacent to Diablo Way for ease of service by the City. The interior of the site would be paved (with the exception of several small areas for landscaping and stormwater treatment) and also contain a fenced off generator, PG&E transformer, and fuel tank.

The preliminary landscape plans depict 1,009 square feet of landscaping (primarily shrubs and low ground cover) and two bioretention areas (i.e., stormwater treatment). Not included in this calculation is approximately 100 square feet of landscaping on the second floor patio. The plans also depict two new shade trees along First Street within the public right-of-way.

Architecture

The proposed 8,137 square foot building would be two stories and a maximum height of 36-feet 2-inches. The interior would consist of two apparatus bays to

accommodate two fire engines, exercise room, locker room, laundry room, outdoor patio (on the second floor), sleeping quarters, kitchen, and dining room.

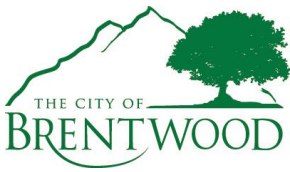


The proposed architecture is described as “American Main Street”, which is closely related to “Early 20th Century Commercial Style”, which is identified in the DSP as an acceptable architectural style for the Downtown. As identified by the DSP for this architectural style, the design of the building incorporates traditional materials found in the proposed architectural style, including full brick, concrete, stucco, and aluminum. The brick would be present on the entire northern, eastern, and southern elevations, and would wrap around to the western elevation (rear of the building) where the building would transition to stucco painted to match the brick.

Architectural features would include precast cornices at the parapet line and precast concrete lintels and sills at all windows and apparatus bay openings on the west elevation (facing First Street). The roof top equipment will not be visible from the public right-of-way as it is setback from the roof’s edge and behind the parapet. The application depicts three metal canopies located on the first floor of the north, east, and south elevations, respectively.

No signage is proposed with this application and the project is conditioned to apply for a separate sign permit for any future signage.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION



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In February 2024, CCCFPD approved a Resolution of Necessity to acquire the subject property and construct the project (the "CCCFPD Project"). CCCFPD determined that the CCCFPD Project was exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15302(c) (replacement or reconstruction of existing utility systems and/or facilities involving negligible or no expansion of capacity) and 15305 (minor lot line adjustments not resulting in the creation of any new parcel). CCCFPD filed a Notice of Exemption with the Contra Costa County Clerk-Recorder on February 20, 2024 reflecting this determination.

Notwithstanding this determination, the City finds that the project under review by the City is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332 (Infill Development). The project is consistent with the applicable General Plan designation, as well as with the applicable zoning designation and regulations, is proposed on a project site less than 5-acres in size, has no value as habitat for endangered species, would not result in significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality, and can be adequately served by all utilities and public services.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. PC Resolution No. 25-004, DR24-013
2. Project Plans
3. Project Description
4. Public comment, Donald Hester
5. Turning Study