

Los Angeles Planning Department to review development plans for Sunkist building in Sherman Oaks

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A plan to have a massive development around the Sunkist building in Sherman Oaks to add residential, commercial and retail space to the iconic structure is getting its first official city review to determine what should be included in an environmental impact report.

IMT Capital, a Sherman Oaks-based developer, wants to add nearly 360,000 feet of new construction for retail, 298 apartment units and 7,241 retail commercial tenants to the property that already includes 120,000 square feet of existing office space.

Attorney Mark Armbruster, who is working with IMT on the project, said the main advantage behind their proposal is preserving the building.

“There were a lot of people interested in this site who wanted to tear down the building,” Armbruster said. “We found a way to preserve it and add some features that will not take away from the site.”

Armbruster said all the proposals being made for the property are consistent with city zoning codes.

The city’s Planning Department is scheduled to hold a scoping meeting, and the deadline for public comments is Wednesday to review what should be included in the full EIR. Residents who wish to submit a comment can go to a website, <http://sunkistbuildingexpansion.com>.

Plans outlined last year called for the residential units to be built in three separate structures on the property. Additional parking also would be provided.

IMT purchased the 8.5-acre site from Sunkist last year, originally saying the plan was to keep it as an office building.

As plans developed, however, IMT decided to add commercial and retail as well as the residential component.

Since it was first opened in 1971, the building at 14130 Riverside Drive, has become one of the iconic structures in the San Fernando Valley, where it can be viewed from the 101 Freeway.

The three-story building is cantilevered out from its base so the top floor is larger than the bottom and it has an open-air atrium in the center of the building.

Richard Close, president of the Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association, which has been working to get people involved in scaling back the project, said there have been in continuing discussions with IMT over

the development.

“The question is if what they are proposing is too big, too massive,” Close said. “There could be tremendous traffic jams and it will have an impact on Westfield Fashion Square, which also wants to remodel.

“So, we could be looking at two massive projects impacting the community.”

Armbruster said such issues should be addressed after the environmental study is completed.

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