

## Plans for housing, retail project on closed courthouse property move forward in San Pedro



San Pedro courthouse redevelopment rendering. (Courtesy Genton Cockrum Partners)

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Plans for an 8-story, 300-unit apartment building on the site of San Pedro's shuttered courthouse has been submitted for approval to the City of Los Angeles — with a newly tweaked design.

The 1.8-acre parcel, 505 S. Centre St., is slated for a mixed-use and mixed-income building that will include a grocery store on the ground floor. Housing will offer affordable and market-rate rentals.

The building will offer studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom units. Parking for 555 vehicles will be included with a sheltered podium space and two underground levels.

The developer, Genton Cockrum Partners, has also submitted an updated design for the 336,000-square-foot building after an earlier drawing was criticized for not blending in with the community enough.

“We really want to design retail that was complementary to downtown and not competitive to what’s there,” said William Cockrum, senior managing partner and president of the development firm. “We really saw it as a way to activate the neighborhood.”

Surrounding retail, he said, could include food and/or fitness facilities.

An open space with landscaping will go on the corner of Sixth and Centre streets, where the front of the building is.

While developments usually take longer than planned, Cockrum said, it’s hoped the project can break ground in 2021 and construction can be completed two years later.

“As is typical in real estate development,” he said, “there are a variety of factors that could impact when exactly we start construction.”

Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn’s office said, in a statement, that the proposal “lives up to our values by requiring 20% of the units be affordable and is both union funded and will be union built.”

The timing of the project is now “in the hands of the city of Los Angeles” but it is hoped the city will prioritize the review and approvals for planning and environmental applications in order to “break ground as soon as possible,” Liz Odendahl, Hahn’s spokesperson, said in a statement.

The project is one of several mid-rise, mixed-use projects in the works for the port community. Proponents see the spike in new construction as a way to revitalize the historic downtown district by bringing in residents who will then drive and support new and existing businesses.

But the proposed growth also has garnered criticism from those who feel the designs do not blend well with the historic look of the town and will bring too much density into the compact harbor community.

Cockrum said the company followed the guidelines laid out by the San Pedro community overlay district, which covers design attributes, landscaping and materials.

The courthouse replacement project has been a long time coming.

The Los Angeles County Courthouse was built in 1969, but budget cuts forced it to close and it has sat empty for about six years.

In March 2018, the county pulled the plug on exclusive negotiations with Holland Partner Group, promising a quickly relaunched project to find a different developer.

The new plans were filed with the city of Los Angeles on June 19.



## **Donna Littlejohn | reporter**

Donna Littlejohn has covered the Harbor Area as a reporter since 1981. Along with development, politics, coyotes, battleships and crime, she writes features that have spotlighted an array of topics, from an alligator on the loose in a city park to the modern-day cowboys who own the trails on the Palos Verdes Peninsula. She loves border collies and Aussie dogs, cats, early California Craftsman architecture and most surviving old stuff. She imagines the 1970s redevelopment sweep that leveled so much of San Pedro's historic waterfront district as very sad.

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