



# Architectural Review Board Report

Architectural Review Board Meeting: November 19, 2018

Agenda Item: 7.3

To: Architectural Review Board

From: Scott Albright, Senior Planner

Cc: Stephanie Reich, AIA, LEED AP, Design & Historic Preservation Planner  
James Combs, ARB Liaison  
Russell Bunim, AICP, ARB Liaison

Subject: 18ARB-0394 review the building design, colors, materials, landscape plans, sign plans, and a sign program for a new five-story (50 feet), 67,426 square-foot, mixed-use building with 5,878 square feet of ground floor commercial space, 100 residential units, and a four-level subterranean parking garage with space for 296 automobiles.

Address: 1430 Lincoln Boulevard  
Applicant: WNMS Communities

## Recommended Action

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board approve application 18ARB-0394 based upon the findings and subject to the conditions contained within this report.

## Executive Summary

In conjunction with a Development Agreement approved on February 27, 2018, proposed is a new five-story mixed-use building with ground floor commercial space, residential units primarily on the upper floors, and a four-level subterranean parking garage below grade. Building and landscape design and materials, as described in this report, are of high quality and comply with the design review findings. A sign program is also proposed that identifies the size, placement, and design for the building identification signage as well as any allowable signs for the future retail tenant spaces.

## Project Description

Proposed is a five-story, 50-feet high, building with four levels of subterranean parking 5,878 square feet of commercial floor area, and 61,569 square feet of residential floor area. The ground floor frontage of the proposed building is composed of two commercial spaces of 2,704 square feet and 3,126 square feet separated by an open courtyard. However, this courtyard space is interrupted by a planter, fence and gate. The residential lobby is centrally located within the open pedestrian plaza and the remainder of the ground level includes 12 residential units toward the rear of the building, as well as landscaped pedestrian/resident circulation areas, a bicycle station with lockers and showers, and related building support facilities. The upper floors include residential units and the related amenities of a recreation room and courtyards on the second and third levels. Vehicular access to the subterranean garage is provided from 7<sup>th</sup> Court alley at the rear of the site.

## **Background**

### Preliminary Architectural Review Board Concept Review

As a Development Agreement, the proposed project was presented to the Architectural Review Board (ARB) for a preliminary conceptual review on April 4, 2016. The ARB thought that the Lincoln Boulevard elevation was well composed with appropriate breaks in massing making it appear as multiple facades, and that its retail scale was an appropriate extension of the current contextual conditions. The Board did, however, express concerns and suggested the design be revisited taking into account:

#### **Building Massing:**

- The massing of the three design elements along the building frontage is broken up well, but are competing and should be revisited.
- The two building masses on either side of the ground floor plaza are not compatible. The materiality should be reconsidered to tie components of each building mass together.

#### **Ground Floor Residential Units Livability and Security:**

- The ground floor circulation areas should be designed to be secured from the public for the safety of the residents.
- Consideration should be given to the residential units at the rear of the ground floor level and their accessibility to light and air.

#### **Open Space:**

- The introduction of the courtyards throughout the different levels of the project is attractive, but courtyards are more effective with respect to light and air when they cut through the entire building.

#### **Building Design:**

- The secondary elevations are not asymmetrical like the front elevation. Some consideration of asymmetry should be given to the secondary elevations.
- The canopy element at the roof is interesting, but its feasibility should be ensured.

#### **Ground Floor Pedestrian Orientation:**

- The floor-to-ceiling height of the ground floor plaza is reduced at around its midpoint below the second floor recreation room, which creates a pinch on the openness of the circulation area.



Project Rendering Previously Reviewed by ARB and Planning Commission

Planning Commission review and recommendation

As a Development Agreement, the Planning Commission reviewed the proposed project and forwarded a recommendation to the City Council for its consideration. During its review on April 20, 2016, the Commission offered the following comments concerning the project’s design:

- *Building Massing and Scale:* The scale of the building works well along Lincoln Boulevard and there is good differentiation between the two masses. Retention of the differentiation should be encouraged.
- *Building Frontage:* The space is used well for a 200-foot street frontage.
- *Materiality:* The different finishes on the two building masses is not necessary and the concept should be revisited so they work better together. Moreover, the south building has the appearance of an office building.
- *Bicycle Storage:* Residential bicycle storage should be located on the ground floor for greater accessibility and convenience.
- *Livability of Units:* Particular attention should be given to the design and location of the rear ground floor residential units with respect to light, air, visibility, and security.
- *Security:* The design of the ground floor open plaza should include some level of security from accessibility by the general public.

- *Pedestrian Orientation:* Many small retail openings are encouraged along the ground floor street frontage.

Prior to review by the City Council, the building design was refined and is represented in the plans under consideration. The approved Development Agreement does not impose any special design considerations for the Architectural Review Board to pay particular attention. The ARB cannot require modifications to the building design which requires modification to the fundamental development standards of the DA, including reduction in the overall height, number of stories, or residential density, or reduce proposed floor area by more than five percent. Otherwise, the Board has full discretion regarding project design recommendations.

**Project / Site Information**

The subject site consists of a single parcel, approximately 30,000 square feet in size. It is located on the west side of Lincoln Boulevard, between Santa Monica Boulevard and Broadway. The site is currently improved with a 86-space surface parking lot with lighting and landscaping improvements.

The following table provides a brief summary of project site data:

Zoning District / Land Use District:	Mixed-Use Boulevard (MUB)/Mixed-Use Boulevard
Parcel Area:	30,000 square feet
Parcel Dimensions:	200 X 150
Existing On-Site Improvements (Year Built):	86-space parking lot with landscaping, constructed (2016)
Historic Resources Inventory Status	Not listed on Historic Resources Inventory
CEQA	The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 21155.1 of the CEQA Guidelines, which exempts a special class of Transit Priority Project (TPP) determined to be a Sustainable Communities Project (SCP) by the local jurisdiction
Adjacent Zoning Districts and Land Uses:	North: DCP-MUB (office) South: DCP-MUB (retail commercial) East: DCP-MUB (retail, personal service) West: DCP-MUB (mixed use)

**Analysis**

The proposed building design is modern/contemporary in design. It features a strong horizontal orientation that is reinforced by a two-level stucco pop-out frame with a bold orange color that sharply contrasts with the remainder of the color palette. This feature spans over the central entry plaza, bridging two metal clad forms. The ground floor has a high level of transparency due to the extensive use of clear glazing. The building at its

center provides additional setback area, creating a 20' wide sidewalk, leading to an open courtyard at the project interior.

Residential units are proposed on all floor levels including the ground floor. These units are set into the project's interior and allow the Lincoln Boulevard frontage to be activated by the proposed commercial tenant spaces. The upper levels provide a significant amount of modulation with varying insets and architectural features that provide a high level of visual interest. An outdoor terrace measuring approximately 58-feet wide is located on the 5th floor at the building frontage to provide additional relief from building mass at the upper levels.

The project includes an artistic interpretation of two trees that penetrate the building, with their "trunks" originating in the ground floor courtyard/setback space and their "canopies" providing shade for the 5<sup>th</sup> floor community gathering space.

This design reflects that which was considered and approved by City Council as part of the Development Agreement. Prior to consideration by the City Council, in response to the feedback received from both the Planning Commission and the ARB, the applicant amended the project design to:

- Improve building massing and scale particularly on the north elevation where it was redesigned to increase the size of the side yard courtyard;
- Extend the architectural concept and its asymmetrical appearance onto the secondary elevations;
- Increase the compatibility of materials along the Lincoln Boulevard elevation with changes to the south volume;
- Disperse the open space throughout the project with open spaces introduced on multiple levels of the project;
- Improve the setting and layout of the rear ground floor residential units to provide greater distance from the sideyard property lines and to also maximize natural light and ventilation opportunities;
- Increase the clearance height of the boxframe on the Lincoln Boulevard elevation to reduce the pinch point and the overall perception of building mass;
- Increase the viability of the front plaza by adding additional entries for the commercial tenant spaces; and
- Execute the architectural concept on all building elevations.

#### Site Planning

The project plans detail the proposed landscaping within the courtyard and the other common open spaces. The courtyard is highly visible from the sidewalk along Lincoln Boulevard at the ground floor level. It features lush plantings and some small seating

areas. However much of this courtyard is reduced by an overly large planter. Reduction and redesign of the planter area is recommended for a more usable communal courtyard. The common open spaces on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floor levels have also been conceptualized to include lounge areas, seating areas, a gym, and a spa. The disbursement of open space allows its integration into the project and increases the convenience to residents. All open spaces are sited to overlook the courtyard, allowing them to visually appear as extensions of the courtyard below.

The four-level subterranean garage is currently designed with vehicular access from 7th Court alley. The proposed garage provides 296 off-street parking spaces for residents, guests, the ground floor commercial uses, and for private off-site users. Appurtenant facilities such as mechanical rooms, refuse and recycling rooms, and utility rooms are typically located within the rear of the project at the ground floor level, and within the subterranean parking levels.

### Landscape Design

The plant palette consists of a variety of drought tolerant species. The plant palette includes the signature plantings consist of the following:

- 15' BTH (brown truck height) Date Palms (*Phoenix dactylifera*), 24" box Tobay Dazzler Cordyline (*Cordyline X'Tobay Dazzler'*) within the courtyard,
- A varied combination of 36" Box Pearl Acacia (*Acacia podalyrifolia*) and 24" box Alphonse Karr Bamboo (*Bambusa X Alphonse Karr*) and 24' box Red-edged Dracena (*Dracaena marginata*), 36" box Meyer Lemon (*Citrus X Limon 'Meyer'*) and 36" box Dragon Trees (*Dracaena draco*) on the second and third floor levels.

These will be underplanted by shrubs, vines and groundcover each with distinct flowering patterns allowing these open spaces to have bursts of color year-round.

The plant species that comprises the proposed "tree canopy" of the ornamental sculpture located on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor is unknown.

Design and Detailing

The concept for this building uses a material palette as shown below.

DESIGN ELEMENTS	PROPOSED EXTERIOR MATERIAL, FINISH AND COLOR
Façade	Metal siding corrugated and flat panel Stucco Concrete block
Windows	Clear anodized aluminum frames (black) with clear glazing
Doors	Aluminum frame (dark bronze finish) with clear glazing
Balcony railings	Metal and glass (dark bronze)
Roof	Thermoplastic, membrane (white)
Refuse Screening	RRR is provided in a room of suitable dimensions and access.
Lighting	Ingrade uplighting Surface mounted linear fixtures

The project will primarily be clad in metal and stucco, utilizing panel systems of varying finishes and installation techniques such as a staggered scale pattern or a corrugated texture for the metal cladding. All panels will have a Mistique Plus (dark grey) color treatment. The large orange projecting frame element along Lincoln Boulevard consists of stucco. This must be detailed to be crisp and clean along its length. The ground floor storefront systems consist of aluminum frames with clear glazing. Balcony railings typically consist of clear glass panels. These materials will be found on the other less prominent elevations. The rear (alley) elevation appropriately utilizes concrete block in the service areas where damage could result. The bold orange color is integrated on all building elevations.

Sign Plans/Sign Program

Approval of sign plans and a sign program (for future retail tenants) for the project is included in the submittal. All of the signs are appropriately sited, generally above the main residential entry, the garage entry, and the planned retail entries. If any of the commercial tenant spaces are further divided, each retail tenant is provided by code of a minimum of 25 square feet of sign area and would have to adhere to the design specifications described in the Sign Program.

SIGN AREA CALCULATIONS	
Multi-tenant Building	Yes.
Existing Sign Program	No.
Permitted Sign Area	183 square feet  Each retail tenant may utilize a maximum of 32 square feet
Existing Sign Area (signs that will remain)	New Construction

Proposed Sign Area (this application)	Sign ST1: "1430" address ground monument sign = 24 SF (exempt) Sign ST2: parking entrance/exiting = 24 SF (exempt) Sign C1: Tenant Sign = 25 square feet max (X 4)= 100 SF
Total Sign Area Upon Completion	148 SF (48 square feet of which is exempt) 100 SF commercial sign area
Total Number of New Signs	6
Compliance	Yes.

Sign ST1 – "1430"

Proposed Sign Type: Monument (ground) sign, 3-dimensional aluminum cut-out, unilluminated  
Proposed Dimensions (Area): 8' X 3' (24 SF)  
Proposed Colors: orange

Sign ST2 – parking entry/exit

Proposed Sign Type: metal cabinet with routed lettering, acrylic face  
Proposed Dimensions (Area): 1' X 24' total  
Proposed Colors: black/white

Signs C1 (4) – "Future Tenant"

Proposed Sign Type: mounted stainless steel letters acrylic faces, illuminated  
Proposed Dimensions (Area): 16" maximum cap height, 25 square feet maximum  
Proposed Colors: black/white/light gray

Impact on Historic Resources

The subject property is not listed on the City's Historic Resources Inventory.

**Code Compliance**

In the processing of the project's development review permit, staff conducted extensive preliminary review for compliance with the Zoning Code, including the base district's development standards, mixed-use design standards and Tier 2 requirements. There do not appear to be outstanding issues that could potentially affect the plans and result in significant changes to the project's design. A complete code-compliance review will occur when the application is submitted for plan check. Any significant changes to the design subsequent to any ARB approval will require Board approval.

**CEQA Status**

The Planning Commission determined that this project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 21155.1 of the CEQA Guidelines, which exempts a special class of Transit Priority Project (TPP) determined to be a Sustainable Communities Project (SCP) by the local jurisdiction. The proposed project meets all of the necessary requirements set forth in Section 21155.1 as a Sustainable Communities Project and, therefore, is exempt from CEQA.

**Summary**

In conclusion, the proposed design for this five-story, mixed-use courtyard building follows through on a consistent concept that creates a structure that will create a unique building

form on this infill lot along Lincoln Boulevard. The building form creates commercial space that enhances the pedestrian experience and residential units with high quality amenities to serve the residents, including attractive and usable outdoor living area. The proposed design is consistent with the City's criteria for design and landscape plan review and approval is recommended.

**FINDINGS:**

- A. The plan for the proposed building or structure is expressive of good taste, good design, and in general contributes to the image of Santa Monica as a place of beauty, creativity and individuality in that its design is a complete architectural concept expressed through a strong patterns of solids and voids, differing window sizes, and pedestrian-oriented ground floor commercial space. The design employs a palette of high quality materials and varying forms that are appropriate for the mix of commercial and residential uses.
- B. The proposed building or structure is not of inferior quality such as to cause the nature of the local neighborhood or environment to materially depreciate in appearance and value in that the building will use high quality material such as, dual pane insulated glass, a combination of decorative metal materials, and outdoor living area that exceeds requirements, as detailed in the application submittal and as presented to the Architectural Review Board.
- C. The proposed design of the building or structure is compatible with developments on land in the general area in that it is similar in height and massing to other area developments along Lincoln Boulevard. The building is consistent with the design and use objectives articulated in the Land Use & Circulation Element (LUCE) for the Mixed-Use Boulevard Low district in which it is located.
- D. The proposed development conforms to the effective guidelines and standards adopted pursuant to Chapter 9.55 – *Architectural Review Board*, and all other applicable ordinances insofar as the location and appearance of the buildings and structures are involved. Specifically, the location and appearance of the buildings and structures comply with required findings set forth in Chapter 9.55, as documented by the Architectural Review Board, and as conditioned, the plans will fully comply with all applicable regulations prior to the issuance of a building permit.

**CONDITIONS:**

- 1. Details shall be provided for the review and approval by staff prior to submittal for plan check to ensure proper implementaion of the design including:
  - Detail of frame element;
  - Detail of custom “trees” at upper level;
  - Fence and gate design;
  - Window railing and balcony detailing;
  - Landscape planters; and
  - Other typical details

2. Prior to plan check submittal, provide a material other than stucco for the orange “frame” element and/or provide details for review and approval by staff to ensure the frame is crisp and clear along its length.
3. All window and storefront frames shall be aluminum.
4. This approval shall expire when the administrative or discretionary entitlements, not including any Subdivision Map approvals, previously granted for the project have lapsed. If no such entitlements have been granted, this approval shall expire 24 months from its effective date.
5. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall demonstrate landscape and irrigation plan compliance with the City’s Green Building Ordinance standards (SMMC 8.108) subject to staff approval. Modifications to the landscape plan that effect less than 150 square feet of area may be reviewed and approved by the Staff Liaison to the Board.
6. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall demonstrate that the plans comply with all applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance. Significant changes to a project’s design shall require review and approval of the Architectural Review Board. Minor changes may be approved administratively pursuant to all applicable guidelines.

The Architectural Review Board’s approval, conditions of approval, or denial of this application may be appealed to the Planning Commission if the appeal is filed with the Zoning Administrator within ten consecutive days following the date of the Architectural Review Board’s determination in the manner provided in SMMC 9.61.100.

### **Attachments**

- A. Applicant’s Submittal Material

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