



Architectural Review Board Report

Architectural Review Board Meeting: November 19, 2018

Agenda Item: 8.1

To: Architectural Review Board
From: Scott Albright, Senior Planner
CC: Stephanie Reich, AIA, LEED AP, Design and Historic Preservation Planner
Subject: Preliminary review of a proposed Tier 2, eight-story, 90,000 square foot mixed-use residential and commercial building with three levels of subterranean parking.

Address: 601 Colorado Avenue
Applicant: Michael W. Folonis Architects

Recommended Action

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board review the project design and provide feedback for the applicant team's consideration for incorporation in the project prior to Planning Commission review.

Executive Summary

Proposed is a new mixed-use, eight-story, 90,000 square-foot building, with three levels of subterranean parking.

This is a Tier 2 project and requires the approval of a Development Review Permit, including required public benefits. There is a requirement for the Architectural Review Board to review the concept design of the project and provide recommendations prior to consideration of the project by the Planning Commission.

Project / Site Information

The proposed eight-story residential and commercial mixed-use building is located on the north side of Colorado Avenue, extending between 6th Street and 6th Court service alley. The site is located in an area of Santa Monica downtown that has many similarly sized and scaled mixed-use projects. The site is currently improved with a one-story retail commercial building with a surface parking lot located in the rear of the building. The existing building has not been identified as a potential historic resource on the City's Historic Resources Inventory. All buildings and improvements have been considered by the Landmarks Commission and received the necessary clearances for demolition.

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

Zoning District / Design Guidelines:	Downtown Community Plan – Transit Adjacent(TA)
Parcel Area (SF):	22,500 square feet
Parcel Dimensions:	150' X 150'
Existing On-Site Improvements (Year Built):	One-story commercial building (1950) with surface parking lot Two story commercial building (1986)
Project height / area / FAR	Eight-stories, 84 feet 90,000 square feet in area 4.00 FAR
Open Space	4135 square feet
Unit Mix / Affordable Housing	140 total units (all affordable units to be provided off-site) Studio units – 0 One-bedroom – 91 Two-bedroom -28 Three-bedroom-21
Adjacent Zoning & Use:	North: DCP-TA - five story residential/commercial South: DCP-TA – Big Blue Bus yard East: DCP-TA – one story commercial West: DCP-TA – one story commercial (seven story mixed use proposed)

Analysis

Site Design

The project consists of a large single building mass consisting of ground floor commercial space and seven residential floors above. The building rises to a maximum height of 84 feet. The building consists of three-levels of subterranean parking, accessed from 6th Court. The ground floor level consists of three commercial tenant spaces primarily oriented toward 6th Street and the street intersection, with the smallest retail tenant space located along Colorado Avenue at its corner with 6th Court service alley.

The ground floor design includes two common open space areas - one 1,186 square foot space serving as a commercial plaza with an opening onto 6th Street, with the other 886 square feet in area serving as a residential entry plaza open to Colorado Avenue. Each of these spaces have been redesigned to feel less confined based on input from staff. Both spaces, particularly the residential entry plaza, has a relatively small area open to the above. Each will be expected to be landscaped and due to their relatively small sizes, there appears to be limited opportunity for programming. The loading zone, refuse/recycling rooms, utility rooms, and other appurtenant equipment are appropriately sited along this service alley at the ground floor level.

- All of the proposed 140 residential units will be located on the upper seven floors. Each of the units will be provided with the required private open space and residents will be served by a 1,177 square foot courtyard open space provided at

the 2nd floor level, a 2,157 square foot rooftop deck with amenities, and a large 5th floor open space situated at the southwest corner to take advantage of views and natural light.

- The proposed 2nd Floor courtyard will be open to the sky (except for bridges) and will be open at the north end of the project above the third floor by a width of 21 feet and open on the south elevation above the ground floor, with the opening slightly shrinking in width to approximately 18 feet from the fourth floor and above. The private balcony spaces reduce the width of the opening.
- Circulation throughout the upper floor is via double-loaded interior corridors with bridges across the courtyard.

Building Design/Architectural Concept

The project design needs to respond to a building that is heavily programmed to accommodate a substantial residential density of market rate units (140 units total, all affordable units will be constructed off-site) along with 11,825 square feet of retail commercial space. The design has evolved after input from staff expressing concern with the massing and the building's busy appearance. As originally presented, the building (rendered below) displayed uniformity with a strong horizontal orientation. It appeared to be broken vertically into separate eight story bays through building off-sets, deep recesses and openings, and circulation corridors. In general, the building displayed a busy uniformity with little variation.

The revised design now includes a framed two-story open space that wraps the corner on the fifth and sixth floors. Bold colors introduced add visual interest and provide contrast against the more neutral tones of the building. The frame around the open space aligns with the balcony edges on other floors. Additional color is also introduced along the 6th Street elevation. The openings to the courtyard along Colorado Avenue also has improved with the addition of the private balcony spaces at the differing floor levels.



Early Design Iteration – Corner of 6th Street at Colorado Avenue



Current Rendering – Corner of 6th Street at Colorado Avenue

Pedestrian Orientation

On the ground floor level, an abundance of clear glazing may help to activate the street frontages, creating a transparent street wall. The Board may wish to consider the continuous use of storefront on the entire street frontage. The building's overhang helps to define the pedestrian realm and keep the project appropriately scaled to enhance pedestrian orientation. The commercial and residential plaza also provide amenities that will also enhance the pedestrian environment.

Design, Details and Materials

The plans do not include material sheets or material call-outs on the plans.

Landscape Design

The plans do not include a conceptual landscape plan and only identify the potential location of landscape planters throughout the site.

DISCUSSION

Staff appreciates the responsiveness of the project design team to staff's concerns. The project design has been revised to open up the courtyard entry off of 6th Street and make this space more useable. The color and the framed open space interrupt the uniformity of the remainder of the building façade. The plans will need to be more complete when the Board officially considers the project design as they currently are lacking the required material details and call-outs, and detailed lighting and landscaping plans.

Staff suggests that the Board may wish to also consider the following with regards to design:

- Does the project have a clear architectural concept?
- Is the architectural concept sufficiently expressed around the building?
- Is the mass and scale appropriate?
- Is the mass and scale sufficiently balanced with variation and open space?
- Is continuous storefront the best approach at the ground floor level?
- What recommendations, if any, would the Board have as the project continues to develop its:
 - material palette?
 - ground floor street frontage?
 - Landscaping?
 - open space?
- Is the project sufficiently pedestrian oriented particularly at the street corners?

Attachments: Applicant's Submittal Material

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