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# Architectural Review Board Report

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**Architectural Review Board Meeting: August 5, 2019**

**Agenda Item: 7.4**

To: Architectural Review Board

From: Russell Bunim, AICP, Associate Planner, ARB Liaison

CC: Stephanie Reich, AIA, LEED AP, Design and Historic Preservation Planner

Subject: 19ARB-0179 to approve the design, colors materials and landscape plans for the construction of a new five-story (47 feet) 81,630 square-foot mixed-use project consisting of 83 residential units, 2,000 square-feet of ground floor commercial space, and a three-level subterranean parking garage.

Address: 1828 Ocean Avenue

Applicant: Koning Eizenberg Architecture

## **Recommended Action**

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board approve application 19ARB-0179 based upon the findings and subject to the conditions contained within this report.

## **Executive Summary**

Proposed is a Tier 2, five-story (47 feet) mixed-use residential and commercial building containing 81,630 square-feet. The project consists of 83 residential units, 2,000 square-feet of commercial space, and a three-level subterranean parking garage for 273 automobile parking spaces and 147 bicycle parking spaces. The proposed design presents four separate building volumes arranged around upper and lower courtyards of common open space. The proposal is tailored to this unique site that has three street-facing elevations, a common property line with a large hotel, and a seven percent slope downward from Ocean Avenue toward Shutters Hotel. Building and landscape design and material, as described in the report, are of high quality and comply with the design review findings. The project design has been revised in response to input received by staff, Architectural Review Board, Planning Commission. Staff recommends approval of the building design and landscape plans.

## **Background**

As a Development Review Permit application, the proposed project was presented to the Architectural Review Board (ARB) for a preliminary review on July 31, 2017. All the Board members were generally supportive of the overall mass and scale of the project and the modern design. The ARB also provided the following preliminary comments:

### *Site Planning*

- Support for the proposed size of the courtyard and Boardmembers noted the project is properly tailored to its unique site.
- Support for the commercial and other uses along Ocean Avenue that will serve to activate this gap in the pedestrian fabric.

- Further develop the open space provided at the corner of Ocean Avenue and Vicente Terrace.
- Further develop pedestrian experience walking on Vicente Terrace.
  - Study the relationship of stoops to the sidewalks and the heights of the retaining/garden walls adjacent the sidewalk.
  - Show full street view section with front yards of R3 District.
  - For example, open space can be better utilized along the Vicente Terrace frontage and the transformer vault could be placed in a less conspicuous location. Pay particular attention to the ground floor balconies and landscaping along the Vicente Terrace frontage.
- Further consideration regarding light, air, and ventilation for the inward facing affordable units on the ground floor courtyard.

### *Massing*

- Overall support for the massing of the project on this site.
- Support for the “diving board” balconies, but had concerns they would become storage areas for tenants.
- Provide even greater transparency in building breaks by providing fewer bridges and/or more transparent bridges and/or wider openings.
- Reconsider the elevation and spacing between the west building and Shutters.

### *Materials and Details*

- Boardmembers agreed that the project should not attempt to imitate Shutters’ architecture or the architecture of the older neighborhood to the north.
- The architectural language appears somewhat generic for this prominent location. The design should have a stronger identity.
- Consider more carefully where different architectural languages meet: where the “Boulevard Building” meets the “Beachfront Building”.

The following illustrations represent the project as presented to the Architectural Review Board on July 31, 2017:



*Illustration 1: Corner of Ocean Avenue and Pico Boulevard*



*Illustration 2: Corner of Ocean Avenue and Vicente Terrace*

The applicant has responded to the preliminary ARB comments by incorporating the following design revisions into the project:

*Site Planning*

- The open space at the corner of Ocean Avenue and Vicente Terrace has been reduced and shifted to allow for larger setbacks on Vicente Terrace and a larger opening for a pedestrian walkway on the Vicente Terrace street side.
- The Vicente Terrace patios have been further refined with landscaping between the patios and the sidewalk as a buffer. Also, the ground floors have been setback to allow for more meaningful front patios similar to the setbacks existing on the north side of the street.
- The inward facing units on the ground floor have been redesigned to allow for additional landscaping along the lower courtyard. Three of the seven ground floor units have patios that are facing and oriented toward Vicente Terrace or Pico Boulevard.

*Massing*

- The building design has been substantially revised to provide a stronger design identity at this important site.
- The top floor has been set back along Vicente Terrace and the ground floor has been revised and brought down along Vicente Terrace.
- The “diving board” balconies and elevations have been redesigned with a series of modulating building façades which angle toward the ocean with larger balconies.
- The northern and southern entries into the courtyards have been widened to allow for more light, air, and ventilation into the courtyard spaces of the project. The opening is 22 feet 6 inches which exceeds the Code requirement for a typical courtyard on large parcels.

- The units that are located on the western property line have balconies and patios that face and are oriented toward Pico Boulevard and Vicente Terrace, rather than towards Shutters building adjacent.

#### Planning Commission Review and Approval

On October 3, 2018 and December 5, 2018, public hearings were held by the Planning Commission to consider the project. Public testimony was generally in opposition to the project, citing concerns about design along Vicente Terrace, concerns about inclusion of corporate housing, concerns about the potential of hotel expansion, and lack of sufficient affordable housing. In approving the project, the Commission included the following conditions:

- Condition #1 required the ARB to pay particular attention to the following design elements:
  - The relationship of the building along Vicente Terrace and Pico Boulevard and the connectivity to the public sidewalk.
  - The ground floor commercial tenant space and the connectivity to the sidewalk along Ocean Avenue and Pico Boulevard.
  - The building design on Vicente Terrace and compatibility to the adjacent low density neighborhood.
  - The planting design details throughout the project.
  - The landscaped and open space area on the corner of Ocean Avenue and Vicente Terrace.
  - The terraced landscaping on Vicente Terrace should not be dominated by concrete planter boxes and should create a more natural, soft-planted area.
  - The pedestrian experience on Pico Boulevard by establishing a visual sense of arrival at the project site that can be anticipated from up the block.
  - On the Pico Boulevard side of the project, consider providing an interactive feature, work of public art, or other element that would be of interest to pedestrians en route to the beach.

#### Appeal to City Council: Review and Approval

The Planning Commission's approval was appealed and went before the City Council for review and approval of the project. No exterior design changes were made to the building. All the conditions of approval from Planning Commission were included in the Council's approval of the project.

In response to the Architectural Review Board and Planning Commission, there have been significant and meaningful design changes to the project. The result is a design that is an appropriately scaled building mass that responds to the unique context to create a pleasant pedestrian experience along Ocean Front Walk in the Oceanfront District.

#### **Project / Site Information**

The subject site consists of a single parcel, approximately 45,120 square feet in size. The property has three street-facing elevation including Pico Boulevard, Ocean Avenue, and Vicente Terrace. Surrounding uses include hotels and low- to medium-density multi-family housing. The site is currently occupied by a surface parking lot serving Hotel Casa del Mar.

The following table provides a brief summary of project data:

Zoning District	OF – Oceanfront District and BCH – Beach Overlay District
Land Use Element Designation	Oceanfront District
Parcel Area (SF)/Dimensions	45,120 SF (209.43 x 215.90)
Existing On-Site Improvements	Parking lot servicing Casa del Mar Hotel
Rent Control Status	N/A
Adjacent Zoning Districts & Land Uses	North: R3 and BCH – Multiple Family Housing West: OF and BCH – Shutters Hotel South: R4 and BCH – Multiple Family Housing East: CC and BCH – Viceroy Hotel
Historic Resources Inventory	N/A

## Analysis

### Site Planning

The project has three street-facing elevations, and all frontages have been designed for unique conditions at each street, while maintaining a cohesive design. The project frontage design on Ocean Avenue features a pedestrian entrance, lobby reception, residential fitness room amenity, and a 2,000 square-foot commercial tenant space including a 440 square-foot patio on Ocean Avenue and a 390 square-foot patio on Pico Boulevard.

The site features a seven percent slope downward in the center of lot from Ocean Avenue to the westerly side of the property (a 13.38-foot drop in grade). Project elements step down along the slope, relating well to the pedestrian on all sides.

The project also fronts Vicente Terrace directly to the north, which is the southern border of the Seaview Terrace & Vicente Terrace potential historic district. In order to relate to the built fabric across Vicente Terrace, the project elements step down along the slope and has been setback beyond the required five-foot street facing setback on Vicente Terrace. Moreover, the Vicente Terrace ground floor of the project has been designed with street facing patios, stairs with direct access to the sidewalk, angled elements, and landscaping to fit within the context of the low-density residential land uses on the opposite side of Vicente Terrace.

A similar setback, angled elements, and relationship to the grade is also provided on the southern frontage for the residential unit(s) on the ground floor fronting on Pico Boulevard. Since the site does not have vehicle access from an alley, the Pico Boulevard side of the property serves as the vehicle access to the site and features driveways for vehicle ingress and egress, loading, and trash pick-up.

### Landscape Design

The residential first floor features a 3,200 square-foot communal courtyard, which provides a variety of amenities for the residents including tables, chairs, and benches. The proposed landscaping in this area consists of large planter buffering the private outdoor space of the residential units from the common open space area. The courtyard space is large enough to provide the necessary buffer while creating social space for the residents. However, as currently designed, the courtyard does not appear to provide much social space. The proposed planter angles and size appear to result in a space that you would move through and may result in a large, passive space. While there is a common open space area on the roof, this courtyard should be revised to provide a sense of place and foster a sense of community.

The landscape plans address common areas, street-side setbacks of the project, and the rooftop amenity areas. The plans indicate a variety of drought tolerant low growth shrubs and ground covers that will add color and texture to the project. Along Vicente Terrace, Ocean Avenue, and Pico Boulevard, the landscape plan includes board-form concrete raised planters containing boulders and a mix of planted area including Blue Clone (Agave “Nova”), Little Ollie Olive (Olea Europaea “Little Ollie”), Coast Rosemary (Westringia Fruticosa “Grey Box”), and Elijah’s Blue Fescue (Festuca Cinerea “Elijah’s Blue”) ground cover.

A planting plan, plant legend, elevation drawings and illustrations of the type of plant material proposed are included with the packet. At the time this report was prepared, the City staff did not have an opportunity to review the project for compliance with the City’s Water Conservation Ordinance; a condition has been added to ensure compliance.

### Building Design/Architectural Concept

The proposed design concept presents four separate building volumes arranged around upper and lower courtyards of common open space. The proposal is tailored to this unique site with three facing sides, a common property line with a large hotel, and a seven percent slope downward from Ocean Avenue toward Shutters Hotel. The building facing Ocean Avenue is a “solid” building with punched openings above a transparent commercial ground floor. Each street facing side has a different neighborhood character and the architectural concept is able to relate to all four sides individually, yet still have a cohesive design fitting within the neighborhood. The Vicente Terrace side is sensitive to the low-scale residential neighborhood across the street. Balconies and entries off Vicente Terrace activate the street reflecting the existing fabric, also with porches and entries off the street.



*Illustration 1: Corner of Pico Boulevard and Ocean Avenue*

**Mass and Scale**

The project is in compliance with the maximum height limitation of 47 feet (no limitation of stories) in the OF District based on the measurement of height using ANG. As a result of the sloped property, using ANG as the basis for height measurement, and identifying Pico Boulevard as the front parcel line, the building massing is three stories at Ocean Avenue and five stories at the westerly property line adjacent to Shutters. The overall building height of the structure does not step down with the natural slope of the property. However, the project is compatible with the neighborhood context by striking balance between two large hotels (Shutters to the west and Viceroy across Ocean Avenue) and stepping down to the lower-scale residential district across Vicente Terrace by providing large setbacks on the ground floor for patios and upper-floor step backs with balconies. Additionally, design elements at the ground floor and breaks in the building give the building a strong sense of fitting well into the site.



*Illustration 2: Vicente Terrace Elevation*



*Illustration 3: Pico Boulevard Elevation*

Design, Details and Materials

The concept of this building employs a material palette as shown below. The materials proposed reflect the clarity and simplicity of the project design. The use of ipe wood siding with clear railings and free form rock cladding seems appropriate.

<b>DESIGN ELEMENTS</b>	<b>PROPOSED EXTERIOR MATERIAL, FINISH AND COLOR</b>
Façade	Ipe Wood Free form rock cladding
Windows	White aluminum storefront Metal with white high performance coating Clear insulated glass
Mechanical Screening	Equipment located behind parapet wall
Lighting	Lighting plan provided: Sheets LT1-LT4
Canopy/Awning/	Metal with white and warm tone high performance coating



Trellis	
Railings	Clear laminated glass

Compliance with Special Conditions related to design

In the processing of the project’s Development Review Permit, staff conducted extensive preliminary review for compliance with the Zoning Ordinance, including the base district’s development 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 would require ARB approval.

Impact on Historic Resources

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

**CEQA Status**

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an EIR was prepared to analyze the potential environmental effects of the 1921 Ocean Front Walk Projects and the 1828 Ocean Avenue Project. While the Projects would require two separate development review permits, both projects are analyzed together in the EIR as required by CEQA.

Based on the analysis provided in the EIR, there are no significant and unavoidable impacts associated with the 1921 Ocean Front Walk Project or the 1828 Ocean Avenue Project (individually and on a cumulative basis) with implementation of mitigation measures as established in the Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Plan (Chapter 11 of Final EIR).

**Summary**

The proposed design for this five-story, residential and commercial mixed-use building follows through on a cohesive concept that creates a structure that will provide appropriate prominence to a key corner in the Oceanfront District at Pico Boulevard and Ocean Avenue. The proposal employs high quality materials that coexist in harmony. The building creates commercial space that enhances the pedestrian experience along Pico Boulevard and Ocean Avenue and residential units with high quality materials 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 findings for approval are made below.

**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 corner element, and pedestrian-oriented ground floor commercial space. The design employs a palette of high quality materials 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 high quality material such as ipe wood siding, free form rock cladding, and a white aluminum storefront system and as detailed in the application submittal and as presented to the Architectural Review Board will be used.
- C. The proposed design of the building or structure is compatible with developments on land in the general area in that the proposed building massing and volumes are consistent with the context of structures of varying heights including Shutters Hotel to the west, multiple-unit development to the south, Viceroy Hotel to the East, and the low-density residential neighborhood to the north. Furthermore, the project promotes an active pedestrian storefront along Ocean Avenue, which is appropriate and consistent with the goals and policies of the Oceanfront District.
- 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. Prior to plan check submittal, the specific wood siding proposed shall be identified for approval by staff.
- 2. Prior to plan check submittal, applicant shall work with staff on further enhancements to the courtyard spaces to ensure a design that promotes communal gathering space for residents of the building.
- 3. 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, or 30 months if in the Coastal Zone unless appealed.
- 4. 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.
- 5. Prior to the issuance of a building permit a hydrozone matrix shall be included in the landscape and irrigation plans that describes for each hydrozone the following: the square footage, percentage of total landscaped area, plant type and plant form,

hydrozone basis, hydrozone description, exposure or micro-climate, irrigation method, irrigation devices (including manufacturer, make and model), zone pressure, precipitation rates, zone gallons per minute and controller station numbers.

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.
7. No building permit shall be issued for the project until the developer complies with the requirements of the Santa Monica Municipal Code with respect to applicable fees.
8. No building permit shall be issued for the project until the developer complies with the requirements of Part 9.30.040 of the Santa Monica Municipal Code, Private Developer Cultural Arts Requirement.

If the developer elects to comply with these requirements by providing on-site public art work or cultural facilities, no final City approval shall be granted until such time as the Director of the Community and Cultural Services Department issues a notice of compliance in accordance with Part 9.30.050

9. No building permit shall be issued for the project until the developer complies with the requirements of Chapter 9.72 of the Santa Monica Municipal Code, the Child Care Linkage Program.

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 SMMC9.61.100.

### **Attachments**

- A. Applicant's Submittal Material