



# Architectural Review Board Report

Architectural Review Board Meeting: January 21, 2020

Agenda Item: 8.1

To: Architectural Review Board

From: Elizabeth Bar-EI, AICP, Acting Principal Planner

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

Subject: Preliminary Review of the design, colors materials and landscape plans for the construction of a new three- and four-story, 125,265 square-foot office building complex and renovation of an existing three-story 45,529 square-foot office building with central courtyard, ground floor restaurant/retail space and three subterranean levels containing 399 parking spaces. [19ENT-0294 (Development Review), 19ENT-0295 (Conditional Use Permit), 19ENT-0296 (Tentative Tract Map)]

Address: 1633 26<sup>th</sup> Street

Applicant: Kilroy Realty Corporation

## Recommended Action

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board review the project design and provide preliminary comments to assist in the development of the project.

## Executive Summary

Proposed is a renovation of an existing 45,529 square-foot office building on the corner of 26<sup>th</sup> Street and Pennsylvania Avenue and construction of two new office buildings with 125,265 square feet on an adjacent parcel currently providing surface parking for the building. Total floor area for the office complex will be 170,794 square feet. The three- and four-story office complex will be organized around an interior courtyard, entered from Pennsylvania Avenue. The colors and materials refers to the traditional use of brick in this area, along with dark gray metal accent siding and windows with dark gray metal frames and muntins. While primarily consisting of office space (either creative or professional office use is requested), a ground floor space fronting on Pennsylvania Avenue will serve as restaurant or other commercial space open to the public.

The project requires a Development Review Permit and a Conditional Use Permit to allow professional office, as required in the Bergamot Area Plan. In addition, the applicants are requesting a Tentative Map for commercial subdivision.

## Background

The office building on the subject site was built in 1973. The surface parking lot was required when the building was constructed and subterranean parking is proposed to replace this parking, along with additional spaces as required for the new buildings.

**Project / Site Information**

The proposed project is in the Bergamot Area Plan’s Bergamot Transit Village (BTV) District. This area is envisioned to transform from an industrial area characterized by large parcels with surface parking lots and little street presence to a lively, mixed-use area with office projects providing jobs near the city’s easternmost Expo Line station and residential uses that support transit-oriented lifestyles.

The following table provides a brief summary of project data:

Zoning District / Design Guidelines:	Bergamot Area Plan; Bergamot Transit Village District
Parcel Area (SF):	87,696 SF
Parcel Dimensions:	186’ x 329.5’
Existing On-Site Improvements (Year Built):	Office building (to be renovated) and surface parking lot
Historic Resource Inventory Status	Existing building is not on the HRI
CEQA	EIR (pending)
Adjacent Zoning & Use:	Bergamot Transit Village (BTV) on all sides  <div style="text-align: center;"> <u>North</u>            Creative office complex (Lionsgate)  <u>South</u>            Creative office  <u>East</u>            Surface parking lot  <u>West</u>            SMC Center for Media &amp; Design         </div>

**Analysis**

Building Design/Architectural Concept

This project would realize the BAP’s intent to provide high-demand, modern office space, within walking distance of the Expo Line. The architectural concept is for the project to be organized around a generous and active courtyard space that opens to Pennsylvania Avenue. The materials represent a thoughtful integration of the Bergamot Area’s character, which once contained a large brickyard from which many local buildings were constructed. Brick exterior and dark grey metal siding will define the new structures, with extensive use of windows to provide a light-filled environment and visibility from the street toward interior wood-beamed ceilings.

The front property line of this corner parcel, as defined in the Zoning Code, is along 26<sup>th</sup> Street, where the existing brick building will remain. The building renovation offers an opportunity to enhance 26<sup>th</sup> Street with a more street-friendly ground floor. The windows and landscaping along the façade will be removed and replaced. The intent is to provide more openings to a patio and compatible landscaping to create a more connected presence along 26<sup>th</sup> Street. Although the main entrance to the office complex will be on Pennsylvania Avenue, the 26<sup>th</sup> Street entrance will remain, and staff has asked for consideration of additional features to address the scale of the openings and strengthen it as a practical building entrance. ARB members might wish to suggest appropriate modifications to enliven the pedestrian environment along 26<sup>th</sup> Street.

### Site and Landscape Design and Pedestrian Orientation

The proposed project will provide additional width for sidewalks as envisioned in the Bergamot Area Plan. There are currently no sidewalks along the Pennsylvania Avenue, although the block has become a popular location for food trucks that serve local employees. The Public Works Department is in the final stages of redesigning Pennsylvania Avenue to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists, adding street trees and other features. The new street design is anticipated to be constructed within the next two years. The applicants are coordinating with the City's transportation engineering consultants to ensure that the new street aligns with the project design for parking entrances and abandoning of existing curb cuts. It is anticipated that there will be some adjustments to the plans presented for this preliminary review related to the new street design.

The ground floor space in the front building on Pennsylvania Avenue should be defined with more specific conditions to ensure that it is open to the public as a restaurant or retail use, as these uses are badly needed in the area. The design for this space should have a legible entrance for the public while meeting the building's security needs.

The landscape design within the courtyard is evolving, with the goal of creating a comfortable outdoor environment for employees. The project architects are also further considering the exterior design to enhance the pedestrian environment and merge with the new street design. This will incorporate short-term bicycle parking (racks), seating and possibly a location for depositing active transportation devices, such as scooters and electric bicycles. The ARB may wish to consider the configuration and conceptual landscape design for the courtyard and its relationship to the street.

### Mass and Scale

The proposed buildings reach a top height of 54 feet, lower than the 60' maximum height permitted in the Bergamot Transit Village for Tier II projects. The building will be lower than the adjacent five-story office complex (Lionsgate). The 1.95 FAR is just below the BTV's Tier 2 maximum (2.0) The configuration of separate buildings around the courtyard connected by a bridge creates an open and airy environment that appears compatible with the intent of the Bergamot Area Plan for this location.

### Design, Details and Materials

The rear and north side elevations, which face the remaining parking lot on Pennsylvania Avenue (a separate parcel) and the rear of the Lionsgate building, respectively, feature a playful, offset pattern of windows that suggest the design of a brick wall, reinforcing the reference to the area's historical industrial/brickyard era. The windows are divided into squares with dark gray metal muntins. The 12' rear yard setback provides access around the buildings and supports the three-dimensional design consistently around the secondary and primary facades.

The following table summarizes the proposed project materials.

<b>DESIGN ELEMENTS</b>	<b>PROPOSED EXTERIOR MATERIAL, FINISH AND COLOR</b>
Façade	Brick, dark gray metal
Windows	Black metal frames; divided
Doors	Glass
Roof	Flat
Mechanical Screening	[Note: nearly all buildings need exterior equipment, which must be screened. The screening design needs to be consistent with the building's architecture.]
Refuse Screening	[plans must show refuge location and the enclosures design]
Lighting	Not yet specified
Railings	Dark metal
Other	Mass timber structure/soffits/ceiling

Potential Impact on Historic Resources

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

**DISCUSSION**

The proposed office complex has a strong architectural concept and its development will be an important contribution to the implementation of the Bergamot Area Plan. The challenge for this project is to redesign an existing building with minimal street presence and merge it with new construction to create a complex that connects with a changing, transit-oriented area. The project makes this connection visually and through proposed amenities, including a retail/restaurant space on Pennsylvania Avenue that would be open to the public. While the street is heavily used now, people cram into the dirt roadside to queue for food trucks, a situation that will be alleviated with the City's streetscape project and further enhanced by this project's amenities. The proposed design is presented for preliminary review so that ARB members may offer suggestions to strengthen the project, particularly in regard to the courtyard, the street presence, and the connection between these two critical design elements.

The Board may wish to consider the following:

- How can the site design be modified for better public access and connectivity?
- Are there additional features or design concepts to improve the 26<sup>th</sup> Street frontage?
- Are there ideas for making the courtyard a space better for both gathering and informal meetings to serve the future tenants at the property?
- Does the landscape design enhance the project?
- Does the Board have any suggestions in regard to the project's materials and details?

**Attachment:** Applicant's Submittal Materials