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# Architectural Review Board Report

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**Architectural Review Board Meeting: February 3, 2020**

**Agenda Item: 7.2**

To: Architectural Review Board  
From: Michael Rocque, Associate Planner  
CC: Regina Szilak, Associate Planner, ARB Liaison  
Stephanie Reich, AIA, LEED AP, Design and Historic Preservation Planner  
Subject: 19ARB-0501 to approve the building design, colors, and materials for the construction of new Tier 3, 8-story mixed-use building with 4,480 square feet of ground floor commercial space and 100 market rate residential units over four levels of subterranean parking.

*The application was reviewed on November 18, 2019*

Address: 1543 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Applicant: WS Communities

## **Recommended Action**

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board approve application 19ARB-0501 based upon the findings and subject to the conditions contained within this report.

## **Executive Summary**

The proposal is a Tier 3, 8-story, 59,848 square foot mixed-use building with 4,480 square feet of ground floor commercial space and 100 market rate residential units on a 14,962 square foot parcel in Downtown. The project includes four levels of subterranean parking with 104 non-required parking spaces and 175 bicycle parking spaces. The project site is a mid-block parcel along the east side of 7<sup>th</sup> Street consisting of two parcels currently developed with a multi-unit residential building and auto storage lot. The architectural treatment of the street front façade, openness of the ground floor and design centered around the creation of two separate masses provide a Contemporary expression that is compatible with the mixed-use developments in the immediate area.

The subject request was previously presented to the Architectural Review Board on November 18, 2019. Also, as reported previously this project is subject to a settlement agreement and is entitled to expedited processing. Specifically, the settlement agreement does not affect the ARB's discretion, but requires the ARB issue a determination for the project within ninety (90) calendar days from the final date of approval for the Administrative Approval (AA) for this project. The AA for this project was approved on November 12, 2019 with a final ARB determination date to be issued by February 11, 2020.

The ARB was supportive of the project development of the design since its initial preliminary review and provided specific direction regarding the materiality or all-stucco nature of the project, the proportion of the two-story columns at the ground level, and the size, span and appropriateness of the louvers at the roof deck. The applicant has revised the submittal to address the Board's comments as summarized below:

### **Board Comments and Applicant Responses**

- *Modify the material at the framed masses to be panel material or material other than stucco to ensure crisp quality of details.*

The material selection at the framed masses and horizontal bands formed by the floor thickness remain clad in stucco while the inset panels within the framed elements have been modified to be box channel corrugated metal (see A.220 and A.900-16), creating both added materiality and texture. Additionally, portions of the balcony fascia are clad in light grey stucco matching the aluminum window frames at the front façade. All remaining windows at the sides, rear and interior courtyard are proposed to be a light grey nail-on vinyl.

- *The louvers attached to the trellis at the roof deck should be metal with a shorter span.*

The new trellis design infills within the same frame with 9"w x 24"d white beams (see A.901-9) which mimic the proportions of the white horizontal bands at the front façade and perforated metal sheeting is inset between the beams creating shade for roof deck area.

- *The columns at the base or colonnade appear dis-proportional. Modify the columns to round concrete columns or potentially smaller steel columns separating from the floor they are supporting.*

The columns at the base have been modified to be 12" square, angled metal columns oriented in a V-shape with each mass supported by three equally spaced columns. The storefront glazing at the ground level has been setback so that there is a small space between the space and the columns, allowing the columns to disengage from that surface and be truly free standing. Lastly, a portion of the previous second floor balcony below the right mass that cantilevered out above the plaza is now cut back so that it aligns with the retail space below which allows for a 2-story dining space below.

- *The roof deck is littered with a variety of separate small planters. Modify the landscape plan by combining the smaller planters into larger planting areas that define large and small social spaces.*

The roof deck landscape and layout area has not been modified. The plant material and selection has been updated to reflect the plants shown in the actual plans. The smaller pots can be eliminated and replaced with linear planters at the elevator

lobby and other areas. A condition has been added to reflect the recommended landscape revisions to be provided for staff to review.

- *The windows on the north elevation at the ground floor should be taller and go full height to match all along the floor.*

The window heights at the ground floor have not been modified from the previous review. The applicant has stated that the window heights at the ground floor match the heights of the units above. These windows are set back for private open space.



Renderings, November 18, 2019



Revised Renderings, February 3, 2020



### Impact on Historic Resources

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

### **Code Compliance**

This application has been preliminarily reviewed for compliance with the base district's development standards which address aspects of the plan that could result in significant changes to the project's design. A complete code-compliance review will not occur until 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 project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15061 (b)(3) in that it can be seen with certainty that the proposed project does not have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment in that the project involves the review of design-related issues associated with the proposed structure(s) in terms of general architectural design, proposed materials, colors, mechanical screening and/or landscape plans.

## **Summary**

The project is a Tier 3 8-story, 59,848 square foot mixed-use building with 4,480 square feet of ground floor commercial space and 100 market rate residential units on a 14,962 square foot parcel in Downtown. The project includes four levels of subterranean parking with 104 non-required parking spaces. The project is a modern/contemporary building design intended to activate the streetscape and enhance the surrounding development and pedestrian realm. The applicant has been responsive to the November ARB comments and have resulted in an improved design. Staff supports the revised project and recommends approval of the mixed-use building design and landscaping.

## **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 the design is straightforward yet interesting, complementing the adjacent buildings while providing its own design identity.
- 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, smooth and light sand finished plaster, corrugated metal, exposed smooth concrete, clear anodized aluminum doors and windows and clear glass/metal mesh railing 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 mass, scale, configuration, stepbacks and sidewalls are all complementary to the adjacent buildings.
- 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 submittal for plan check, the applicant shall submit a revised sign program for staff review that includes the following:
  - All retail tenant signs shall not include a visible raceway
  - All retail blade (projecting) signs shall not exceed a total of 4.5 square feet
2. Stucco shall be smooth finish.
3. Prior to plan check submittal, the applicant shall submit a revised roof deck landscape plan that show the smaller pots be eliminated and replaced with linear planters at the elevator and other areas along the roof deck.
4. Prior to plan check submittal, the applicant shall provide details of exterior façade material transitions (at corners, under balconies, etc.) and other typical and unique details subject to staff review and approval.
5. 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.
6. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall revise project drawings or provide additional and/or supplemental drawings and/or details to provide details of the proposed cable system to maximize wall coverage in noted planted wall surfaces subject to staff review and approval.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.

10. 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

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 (January 21, 2020)
- B. November 18, 2019 Staff Report

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