



# Architectural Review Board Report

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

**Agenda Item: 8.1**

To: Architectural Review Board  
From: Michael Rocque, Associate Planner  
CC: Stephanie Reich, AIA, LEED AP, Design and Historic Preservation Planner  
Subject: Preliminary Review of the design, colors and materials for the construction of a new Tier 2, 6-story, mixed-use building with approximately 2,562 square feet of ground floor commercial space with 94 SRO units and 26 residential units over four levels of subterranean parking.

Address: 1338 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Applicant: KFA Architects

## **Recommended Action**

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board review the project design and provide feedback to staff and the applicant team for incorporation into the project.

## **Executive Summary**

The proposal is a Tier 2, 6-story, 52,273 square foot mixed-use building with approximately 2,662 square feet of ground floor commercial space with 94 SRO units and 26 residential units on a 14,985 square foot parcel in Downtown. The project includes four levels of subterranean parking levels with 116 non-required parking spaces and (19 short-term and 159 long-term) bicycle parking spaces. The project site is located along the west side of 5th Street and is currently developed with a surface level parking lot.

Pursuant to the Downtown Community Plan application thresholds, housing projects up to 75,000 square feet require an Administrative Approval. The Architectural Review Board is required to conceptually review the project and provide design recommendations prior to the issuance of an Administrative Approval.

## **Background**

As reported by the City Attorney at the June 25, 2019 City Council meeting, the City and WS Communities reached an agreement to settle a threat of litigation related to six proposed single room occupancy (SRO) housing projects located at 1415 5th Street, 1437 5th Street, 1437 6th Street, 1323 5th Street, 1557 7th Street and 1338 5th Street.

Specifically, the settlement agreement does not affect the ARB's discretion, but requires the ARB issue a determination for all the projects listed above within ninety (90) calendar days from the final date of approval for the Administrative Approvals for the projects. And, in the event of an appeal (or appeals) of the ARB's design review determination(s) to the Planning Commission, a hearing shall be scheduled within sixty (60) days, and final

determination must be issued for the appealed project(s) within thirty (30) days following the submittal of the appeal(s), in accordance with the Santa Monica Municipal Code.

**Project / Site Information**

The project site is currently a mid-block parcel developed with a surface parking lot. The site is located on the west side of 5<sup>th</sup> Street between Santa Monica Boulevard and Arizona Avenue with alley (4<sup>th</sup> Court) access. The 1300 block of 5<sup>th</sup> Street consists of a mix of buildings and uses including mostly one- and three-story commercial office buildings on the east side of 5<sup>th</sup> Street, and directly north and adjacent to the site is a large city owned surface level parking lot which is a pending Development Agreement mixed-use project, The Plaza at Santa Monica. Also, located across the street, east of the subject site is a pending Administrative Approval mixed-use project with the same ownership group consisting of 41 SRO units and 11-market rate units at 1323 5<sup>th</sup> Street.

Zoning District / Design Guidelines:	DCP-NV, Downtown Community Plan – Neighborhood Village
Parcel Area (SF):	14,985 SF
Parcel Dimensions:	Approximately 50'W x 150'D
Existing On-Site Improvements (Year Built):	Surface level parking lot
Project height / area / FAR	6 stories/ 60-feet 52,273 SF 3.5 FAR
Unit Mix / Affordable Housing	120 total Housing units 94 SRO units <u>26 Tier 2 Market rate units</u> Studios: 0 units 1 BDRM: 16 units 2 BDRM: 6 units 3 BDRM: 4 units <u>19 Affordable units provided per settlement agreement</u> 20% of Market rate units: 26*.20=5 units 15% of SRO units: 94*.15= 14 units
Historic Resource Inventory Status	Property is not listed on the Historic Resource Inventory
CEQA	Exempt pursuant to Section 15061 (b)(3)
Adjacent Zoning & Use:	North DCP – NV, city owned surface parking (Pending Development-Plaza at Santa Monica ) South DCP – NV, 5-story-commercial (Office) East DCP – NV, 3-story commercial parking structure and pending 6-story AA mixed-use project West DCP – BC, Bank and commercial (retail)

## **Analysis**

### **Site Design**

The proposal is for a new six story, 60-foot tall mixed-use project comprised of ground floor commercial/residential and five residential floors above. The project also includes four levels of subterranean parking that includes, storage, bike parking and mechanical equipment rooms. Pursuant to SMMC Section 9.28.040(A)(6)(a), there is no minimum parking requirement for projects located in the DCP, however the applicant is providing 116 spaces which is 42 additional spaces than the maximum allowed (74) per the settlement agreement.

The ground floor design is envisioned for 2,662 square feet of area comprised of two large commercial tenant spaces with recessed entries at the building frontage and a recessed entry to a 452 square foot lobby at the north end of the site. Two leasing offices and seven residential units are located around a 1,678 square foot courtyard towards the center of the site. At the rear of the site adjacent and to the alley is the required trash room along with the loading area, parking access ramp and other utility and transformer rooms. The upper floors consist of the remainder of residential units following generally the same building footprint throughout each of the floors.

At the ground floor there is a 1,678 square foot courtyard located towards the center of the site that extends into a portion of the southern side yard which is open to the sky. There is also a 400 square foot community room adjacent to the courtyard that has a folding glass wall that opens to the courtyard space. The courtyard space has been designed to allow for the maximum amount of useable area at the south end as it terraces and extends into the ground floor community room to form a bench, tying the two areas together (see A300) . Residential elevators are located at the south end of the project with two stairwells located at both east and west ends of the site. Additional open spaces for residents are available on both the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors (community rooms) and on the roof which is designed and broken into three smaller roof deck areas at the east and west ends of the site and a section that overlooks the courtyard below. The Board may wish to consider the configuration of the three-roof deck open space areas and if the programming is effective. Additionally, the Board may also consider if the community rooms on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors can be opened more or to provide additional light and air.

### **Building Design / Architectural Concept**

The proposed building design provides a modern infill project that activates the pedestrian frontage along the 1300 block of 5<sup>th</sup> Street with retail spaces and building entries. The main façade along 5<sup>th</sup> Street provides three-dimensionality expressed by projecting, angled private balconies at each level. The façade is designed so that there are five narrow bays on the south end of the building and three on the north with a split occurring off-center for a more interesting and less bisected reading. The Board may wish to consider if the building concept is achieved holistically around the entire building.

### **Mass and Scale**

As an infill project, the immediate context of mass and scale is established by a few of the existing multi-story buildings located on the east side of 5<sup>th</sup> street and directly north and adjacent to the site which is a pending Development Agreement mixed-use project, The Plaza at Santa Monica which will be larger in mass and scale. Additionally, located

across the street, east of the subject site is a pending Administrative Approval mixed-use project at 1323 5<sup>th</sup> Street which will also be 6 stories and 60 feet in total height matching the current massing of the subject building. The project complies with the allowable development envelope and the upper levels are stepped back relating well to the neighboring structures.

At the ground floor, the storefront glazing maximizes visual permeability at the commercial tenant space. The Board may wish to consider if the commercial space should have a more unique identity, or more integrated with the floors above.

At the south side elevation, the façade can be further refined and developed to be more consistent with the other elevations. At the west elevation (rear) there appears to be an opportunity to carry or bring down the façade to the ground floor or 2<sup>nd</sup> floor line. The Board may wish to provide guidance as to how the elevations could be further developed.

At the roof deck level there is a white metal trellis located at both the east and west roof deck areas which are setback from the roof and serves as a shade structure for a portion of the roof deck open space. The Board may wish to consider how the trellises at the top relate to the rest of the project and balconies below.

#### Materials and Details

A generic key of proposed materials is labeled on the elevation sheets on the applicant's submittal and details were not included at this time. The Board may wish to provide feedback and/or convey expectations of the formal design review plan submittal.

#### Landscape Design

The plans do include a conceptual landscape plan. The common open space areas, specifically the ground level courtyard and roof deck, should be considered as well as any areas along the ground floor street frontage and alleys should be considered areas for landscape design development. The Board may wish to provide guidance as to expectations of the landscape design in these spaces.

#### Potential Impact on Historic Resources

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

### **DISCUSSION**

Proposed is an is a Tier 2, 6-story, 52,273 square foot mixed-use building with approximately 2,662 square feet of ground floor commercial space with 94 SRO units and 26 residential units on a 14,985 square foot parcel in Downtown. The proposed building design provides a modern infill project that activates the pedestrian frontage along the 1300 block of 5<sup>th</sup> Street with retail spaces and building entries. The main façade along 5<sup>th</sup> Street provides three-dimensionality expressed by projecting, angled private balconies at each level.

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 overall configuration appropriate to the project site and surrounding context?
- Is the configuration of the three-roof deck open space areas and programming effective?
- Can the community rooms on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors be opened more to provide additional light and air into the spaces?
- How does the trellises at the top relate to the rest of the project and balconies below?
- Is the mass and scale appropriate?
- What areas of the project require further design study?
- Is the building concept achieved holistically around the building at all elevations?
- Are the proportions of windows and other elements appropriate for the overall design?
- Do materials and details enhance the overall concept and represent a high-quality project?
- What is the landscape design concept for the site?
- What design considerations should be addressed in the common open space areas?
- Where would landscaping be appropriate?
- What is the lighting strategy for the exterior of the building?

## **Attachments**

### **A. Applicant's Submittal Material**

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