



# Architectural Review Board Report

Architectural Review Board Meeting: May 4, 2020

Agenda Item: 8.1

To: Architectural Review Board  
From: Rathar Duong, Associate Planner  
Cc: Stephanie Reich, AIA, LEED AP, Design and Historic Preservation Planner  
Subject: Preliminary Review of a proposed Tier 2, three-story, 20,000 square-foot commercial/retail building above a partial basement located in the Bayside Conservation district of the Downtown Community Plan (DCP) (19ENT-0430).  
Address: 1404-1408 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Promenade  
Applicant: Blatteis & Schnur, Inc. DBA Kenza Promenade, LLC

## 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 prior to approval of a Development Review Permit (DRP) application.

## Executive Summary

Proposed is a new 20,000 square foot, 55-foot high commercial/retail building on an approximately 7,500 square-foot lot. The design features an all-glass façade punctuated with steel elements. The design relates to the eclectic mix of architectural styles featured by commercial, retail, office, and residential buildings within downtown while creating a new building. The contemporary building features a flat roof integrated with an outdoor terrace. A simple material palette is proposed, including extensive frameless and storefront glass systems on the street-facing façade with steel, concrete block, and stucco on the alley facade. Primary pedestrian access will be from Third Street Promenade with secondary access from 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Court (alley).

Pursuant to the SMMC Section 9.40.020 (A)(1), any project that exceeds Tier 1 maximum limits requires a Development Review Permit (DRP). A preliminary design review by the Architectural Review Board is also required to provide design recommendations prior to the issuance of an approval. The project will return to the Board after the DRP application is approved for final design review.

## Project / Site Information

The project site is located midblock on the west side of Third Street Promenade between Broadway and Santa Monica Boulevard in downtown within the Bayside Conservation (BC) District of the Downtown Community Plan.

The parcel was originally developed in 1918 with a three-story retail-office building that has been renovated multiple times. It is surrounded by a variety of commercial, retail, office, residential, and other service-related uses that serve the downtown community. The existing building is not a designated historic resource or listed on the Historic Resources Inventory (HRI).

The following table provides a brief summary of project data:

Zoning District / Design Guidelines:	Bayside Conservation (BC)
Parcel Area (SF):	Approximately 7,500 SF
Parcel Dimensions:	50' W x 150' D
Existing On-Site Improvements (Year Built):	Three- story commercial/retail building (1918)
Historic Resource Inventory Status	Existing building is not on the HRI
CEQA	<p>The proposed project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15182, which exempts projects that are consistent with a specific plan adopted pursuant to Title 7, Division 1, Chapter 3, Article 8 of the Government Code. Specifically, the proposed project meets all of the criteria prescribed in Section 15182:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The project has a floor area ratio of at least 0.75</li> <li>2. The project is located within a transit priority area, which is defined in Public Resources Code section 20199(a)(7) as an area within 0.5 mile of a major transit stop</li> <li>3. The project is consistent with a specific plan for which an EIR was certified (Downtown Specific Plan EIR was certified in 2017)</li> <li>4. The project is consistent with the general use designation, density, building intensity, and applicable policies of SCAG's Sustainable Communities Strategy/Regional Transportation Plan</li> </ol>
Adjacent Zoning & Use:	<p>North: BC – Retail          South: BC – Retail          East: BC – Retail          West: BC – Retail</p>

## Analysis

### Site Planning

The in-fill parcel is an interior approximately 7,500 square-foot lot located between Broadway and Santa Monica Boulevard on the west side of Third Street Promenade in downtown. Second Street Court (alley) is located along the rear of the parcel within easy access to a public parking. The proposed three-story building is rectangular in shape and extends to the property lines. The building placement is consistent with existing development pattern on the Promenade and retains the connectivity to the Promenade and pedestrian realm. Once completed, the building will abut the two existing buildings to

its north and south and capped with a flat roof/roof terrace. Other features include a trash/recycling room, transformer room and loading area at the rear of the building.

### Building Design/Architectural Concept

The street-facing elevation is entirely clad in frameless glass and storefront systems resulting in a transparent façade adding to a seamless transition between the private property and the public realm. The proposed design can be described as a glass box punctuated by a recessed third floor balcony, a recessed entry, and glazing. The design is informed by a number of existing buildings shown on Sheets A1.6 -1.8, particularly the Apple Store, which is located within the same block on the Promenade. While there is a mix of architectural styles within the Promenade and surrounding downtown development, the building's simple design and its all-glass front façade make it stand out from the surrounding storefronts. Unlike neighboring buildings, the alley or 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Court elevation of the proposed building is more transparent and echoes some similar design elements to the front elevation by incorporating a storefront glazing system at the rear elevation. This elevation shows a framed glass box on top of a base. The rear alley elevation depicted on Sheet A4.4 is different from the front elevation due to the solid and void ratio and application of materials. The side elevations are at the property lines and will be simply finished with concrete block as depicted on Sheet A4.3.

### Mass and Scale

The surrounding context consists of older and refurbished buildings ranging from one- to three-story commercial, retail, and office buildings as illustrated on Sheets A1.1 - A1.4, the proposed three-story retail-commercial building is consistent with the pattern of development in the immediate vicinity.

The front and most visible façade is primarily treated with seamless glass and storefront system glazing that opens to the Promenade. The third floor is recessed with a 15-foot deep balcony, also treated with glass railing. The recessed third floor helps break the two-story glass façade below it, which helps minimize the appearance of a taller building from the pedestrian perspective.

The front elevation is comprised of seamless and storefront glass punctuated with steel elements. The storefront glass system on the third level and rear elevation creates a more pronounced pattern created by the vertical and horizontal mullions, while the first and second floor is seamless or butt-joint glazing. In general, the positioning of the glass panels and windows lend a vertical design expression on the front façade. The rear façade depicts a more varied and balanced composition due to the mix of materials incorporated into the elevation. The extensive glazing throughout the project provides visual transparency into and out of the building. The Board may wish to provide direction regarding the design and treatment of the front façade so that it relates better to the scale of the Promenade.

### Design, Details and Materials

The building's contemporary design references its surrounding downtown commercial zone. Third Street Promenade shopping district possesses a unique character and shopping experience defined by its development pattern, scale, building design, including several historic buildings, both as designated landmarks or listed on the Historic

Resources Inventory (HRI) as architecturally significant buildings. However, numerous buildings have undergone façade remodels through the years as retail/restaurant tenants move in or site have been redeveloped, such as the Apple Store. For this reason, the contemporary glass-clad building is a newer type of design not unfamiliar within this context. The rear elevation appears most conventional and is adeptly designed through its material type and overall composition. Care should be given to important details including where different materials meet and terminate. The material and color palette are generally complementary and support the building architectural concept.

### Landscaping

Typical of development within the Promenade is that buildings are constructed to the property lines; leaving little or no room for landscaping. If landscape exists, it is generally in planters and pots. The lack of landscape on private properties is supported by existing landscape within the Public Right-of-Way since the Promenade is designed as a walk-street. The proposed project provides outdoor space on the roof terrace with built-in planters. As illustrated on Sheet A3.5, a number of trees and other plant materials will be provided within these planters to enhance the usability of the roof terrace and create buffer from the adjoining buildings. A fully developed landscape plan will be provided when the project returns for the Board's final review. Perhaps, the applicant should consider providing landscaping and appropriate lighting along the rear alley elevation to help create a welcoming arrival experience. The Board may wish to suggest ways landscape and lighting design can complement the building design, features and scale.

### Potential Impact on Historic Resources

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

## **DISCUSSION**

The proposed contemporary three-story, retail-commercial building is a replacement of an existing three-story retail-commercial building located midblock between Broadway and Santa Monica Boulevard within the Third Street Promenade shopping district. The building responds to the surrounding eclectic architectural styles of existing buildings along the Promenade. However, the two-story, all-glass façade deviates from the established scale and context of the immediate area. Its footprint generally extends to the property lines to fully utilize the site, but incorporates design features that maximizes light, air, and circulation to improve the quality and usability of the interior space as well as the rooftop terrace. The proposed design is distinctive on its own by way of its glass-clad façade of seamless and storefront glass systems and stepped third floor that is the balcony. The design of the building and its finishes also connect the project to the public realm and highlight its transparency into and out of the building.

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?
- Does the use of materials create an integrated approach that enhances the design concept?
- Do all the design elements work well together to enhance the project design?

- How can landscaping re-enforce the design, usability/programming of the rear terrace, and transition between private and Public Right-of-Way?
- Is the overall configuration appropriate to the project site and surrounding context? Specifically, is the design in its expression and perceived scale appropriate to the Promenade?
- Does the design of the ground floor promote connectivity and pedestrian activity?
- Is the rooftop/mechanical equipment and solar panels sensitively integrated into the roof design?

## **Attachments**

- A. Applicant's Submittal Material

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