



Architectural Review Board Report

Architectural Review Board Meeting: May 18, 2020

Agenda Item: 7.4

To: Architectural Review Board
From: Cary Fukui, Associate Planner
CC: Stephanie Reich, AIA, LEED AP, Design and Historic Preservation Planner
Subject: 20ARB-0144 to approve the design, colors materials and landscape plans for the construction of a new four-story, 42,766 square foot, 100% affordable, mixed-use building with 48 units and approximately 4,174 square-feet of ground floor commercial space, and subterranean parking.

Address: 1819 Pico Blvd
Applicant: Daisy Miguel, Community Corporation of Santa Monica

Recommended Action

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board approve application 20ARB-0144 based upon the findings and subject to the conditions contained within this report.

Executive Summary

Proposed is a new four-story, mixed-use residential and commercial building containing 42,766 square feet of floor area. The project is for 100% affordable housing, consisting of 48 residential units, 4,174 square-feet of commercial space, and one level of subterranean parking. Building and landscape design and material, as described in this report, are of high quality and comply with the design review findings. The project design expresses a clear architectural concept appropriate to its site and program. Staff recommends approval of the building design and landscape plans.



Project Rendering – Pico Boulevard elevation



Project Rendering – 19th Street elevation

Project Description

The proposed project is a Tier 1, four-story, 42,766 square foot, mixed-use building with 48 residential units, and 4,174 square-feet of commercial area. The project provides 34 residential parking spaces and 15 commercial spaces, a total of 49 parking spaces provided. Additionally, the project provides 94 stalls for long-term bike parking underground and 15 stalls for short-term bike parking at the ground floor. The proposed building is sited around a 2,422 square foot courtyard with an additional 5,278 square-feet of common outdoor spaced provided at the upper floors. The 100% affordable housing project takes advantage of Assembly Bill (AB) 1763 to provide an additional 6’ in height above the 40’ height limit and a reduction in the required parking ratio to 0.5 spaces per unit, as well as one concession for relief from the daylight plane requirement for mixed-use projects adjacent to a residential zone.

Background

20ENT-0020: Administrative Approval 20ENT-0020 was approved on April 4, 2020 for the proposed 100% affordable, 48-unit, mixed-used project.

Project / Site Information

The project site is located on the northwest corner of Pico Boulevard and 19th Street on two lots, totaling 21,524 square feet. This intersection is comprised of one- and three-story residential and commercial buildings, including facilities for Santa Monica College, office, residential, and adult care residential. The subject site abuts an R2 (low-density residential) parcel to the north, and NC (Neighborhood Commercial) parcels to the east and west. Across Pico Boulevard to the south is Santa Monica College.

The following table provides a brief summary of project data:

Zoning District / Design Guidelines:	Neighborhood Commercial (NC)
Parcel Area (SF):	21,524 SF
Parcel Dimensions:	150' x 163.37'
Existing On-Site Improvements (Year Built):	1819 Pico Blvd, Church (1950) 2024 19th St, 5-Unit Multi-Family Residential (1957) All buildings and improvements were reviewed by the Landmarks Commission on December 10, 2018 and received the necessary clearances for demolition.
Historic Resource Inventory Status	Existing buildings are not on the HRI.
CEQA	Exempt pursuant to Section 15194
Adjacent Zoning & Use:	North R2 – One-story multi-family residential South PL – Three-story school (Santa Monica College) East NC – Two- and three-story adult care facility West NC – One-story commercial

Analysis

Building Design/Architectural Concept

The project is expressed as a “village”, composed of three separate building forms organized around open space. Along the Pico Boulevard frontage, the ground floor commercial is transparent and staggered with the building appearing as a solid floating above. Additional articulation is created at the upper floors with projecting window boxes, creating pushes and pulls without a change in massing that would lead to a reduction in units. A large frame element gathers the upper floors to provide a strong presence along Pico and relating well to the new Santa Monica College building across the street.

A break between the buildings is provided at the 19th Street elevation starting at the second floor. This allows for the village expression to come through at the exterior elevation of the project. This opening also allows for light and air to access the interior courtyard. The roof is setback at the 19th Street elevation to provide additional articulation and to lighten the massing off the commercial boulevard. A cantilever is provided that extends the massing of the 3rd floor over the 2nd.

Site and Landscape Design

The ground floor is programmed to contain commercial space, inclusive of a food hall for local food vendors, four ground floor residential units, a manager’s office and support office, as well as a community room. The ground floor is setback at the corner of Pico and 19th providing an outdoor space for dining and emphasizing the solid void relationship with the mass above. The four ground-floor residential units are sited at the rear of the

project, adjacent to the R2 parcel to the north, and a landscaped planting strip to provide some protective buffering. Parking access, loading zones, and refuse areas are located off of 18th Court to the east.

The landscape design complements the building and site design in its use of blocks of planting, such as Lomandra Longifolia ‘ Dwarf Matt Rush’ in the parkway along 19th Street and Carex Divulsa ‘Berkeley Sedge’ punctuated by Achillea Millefolium ‘CA Yarrow”. The ground floor courtyard employs an inventive use of shaped mounds with landscaping to define the play area, and for the outdoor space on the upper levels a prefabricated system of planters and seating to define and activate the space.

Mass and Scale

The project is designed as a village, with a grouping of forms around a common courtyard space. The use of several forms to compose the building results in a different face to each frontage while expressing a unified whole. The forms are spaced at the upper floors to create gaps that allow light and air to enter the interior open space and allow for ventilation through the building. The massing appears more prominent on the Pico Boulevard frontage due to the expression of the roof line and is expressed as a single mass with a large recessed area punctuated by several forms, all hovering over a transparent ground floor. The massing breaks down around the corner on 19th Street, as the building approaches the residential districts through a removal of the roof line and more prominent breaks in massing at the upper floors. Along the north and west (alley) elevations the building is more quiet with subtle articulation appropriate to site conditions.

Design, Details and Materials

The materials used highlight the formal architectural ideas. The primary mass is clad in stucco with an ordered yet varied reveal pattern that provides a rhythmic relationship to the fenestration. The forms within the opening are consistently clad in siding of different shades of blue, carried into the window box forms that provide punctuated shade and shadow around the building. Details of materials are simple and clean to complement the overall design.

DESIGN ELEMENTS	PROPOSED EXTERIOR MATERIAL, FINISH AND COLOR
Façade	Stucco-smooth, painted light grey Fiber Cement board, deep blue Fiber Cement board, light blue Fiber Cement board, cream
Windows	Storefront: Aluminum frame, grey anodize Clear glazing Residential: Vinyl, silver Fiber cement board window boxes, deep blue, light blue, and cream
Doors	Storefront: Aluminum frame, grey anodize Clear glazing Residential: Hollow metal, painted grey
Roof	PVC, white

Mechanical Screening	CMU, transparent
Refuse Screening	N/A
Lighting	
Canopy/Awning/ Trellis	Aluminum window boxes, painted charcoal Cement board, deep blue
Railings	Metal pickets, light grey
Other	N/A

Compliance with Special Conditions related to design

Per Government Code 65915 and AB 1763, the project receives an additional 6' above the 40' height limit, a reduction in residential parking requirements down to 0.5 parking spaces per unit, and one concession for relief from the daylight plane requirement for elevations adjacent to residential districts.

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.

Additionally, the existing structures proposed for demolition are over 40 years old. On December 10, 2018, the Landmarks Commission reviewed the demolition permit application and took no action. Based on the substantial evidence in the record, no further analysis is required to evaluate the potential environmental impact of the demolition on historic resources pursuant to CEQA.

Summary

The proposed four-story, 48-unit, 100% affordable, mixed-use project is appropriate in scale, massing, and design. The proposal presents a clear architectural idea highlighted with quality materials and details with ample common outdoor space to enhance the quality of life of the tenants.

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 a complete architectural concept expressed through a pattern of window boxes, voids in massing and building form, materiality, and pedestrian-oriented commercial space along Pico Boulevard, a commercial boulevard. The use of various forms creates a different character of façade along each building elevation while providing a holistic and integrated design.
- 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 cement board, anodized aluminum, smooth stucco, 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 massing of the structure is more prominent along Pico Boulevard across from the institutional uses and design of Santa Monica College, and is scaled back with additional modulation and gaps in building forms along 19th Street, as the building approaches residentially zoned parcels and low-density multi-family structures.
- 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. 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.
- 2. 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.

3. 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.
4. 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.

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