



Architectural Review Board Report

Architectural Review Board Meeting: June 8, 2020

Agenda Item: 7.1

To: Architectural Review Board
From: James Combs, Associate Planner
Cc: Stephanie Reich, AIA, LEED AP, Design & Historic Preservation Planner
Subject: 20ARB-0091 to approve the location, size, and context of a mural on an existing building.
Address: 1349 26th Street
Applicant: Community Corporation of Santa Monica

Recommended Action

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board approve the location, size, and context of the proposed mural as it relates to the architecture of the existing building as conditioned in this report to replace the area of the existing mural.

Executive Summary

The applicant proposes to paint both the east and west portions of the existing first floor mural with a new mural for the full height of the building along the portion of the 26th Street (west) elevation closest to Santa Monica Boulevard.

Background:

ARB 06-20: On February 6, 2006 the Board approved a revision to the proposed building materials of a four story, 44-unit affordable housing project.

APP 03-017: The Planning Commission approved ARB 03-384 for this project on appeal at the January 21, 2004 meeting after it was technically denied by the Architectural Review Board.

ARB 03-384: The Board technically denied the original application on November 3, 2003

AA 03-010: The Zoning Administrator approved Administrative Approval 03-010 on September 12, 2003 for the four-story, 44-unit affordable housing project.

Analysis

The primary design concept of the Twenty-Sixth Street façade is of a solid frame that borders an area defined as an open void. The void is composed of glazing and of the

actual open space in the entry. The glazing is covered by a unifying sunscreen that reads as a single element. Overall the façade is made up of a limited number of large movements. The long-term plan was always to use the existing mural as a place holder until a piece could be commissioned, however, there was no intention presented to the Board to cover the whole wall. The minimal size and location of the mural on the ground floor was purposeful, it provides pedestrian interest with minimal interference to the simplicity of the building. The proposed mural encompasses the existing mural area at the first floor and the upper stories of the southern half of the 26th Street. While the intent to espouse creativity and create pedestrian interest is encouraged, a full height mural at this location would distract from the juxtaposition of the flat wall paired to the void which is the defining characteristic of the building. The 2003 ARB staff report took a strong stance on the importance of the setback entry feature of the 26th Street elevation stating:th Street elevation stating:

“... the setbacks from the frame and voids of porch and entry in the building have great value in giving animation, articulation and order to the building, while the level of conception and execution of the building will qualify the building as a new landmark for Santa Monica. For example, there is at present no residential project in the city that has such a triple height entry with its attendant sense of spatial excitement and airiness.”

“While the area of blank wall on the south end of the Twenty-Sixth Street façade might not appear conventionally residential in character, it has nonetheless been carefully articulated by a reveal-like window at the third story, and another reveal-like, L-shaped window in the ground level. The area of blank wall and the narrow windows each reinforce the character of the other by their opposition.”

Staff recommends a condition of approval that the new mural be limited to the areas of the existing mural in order to preserve the character of the existing building as it was intended by the architect. Findings for an approval are provided below should the Board approve the application as conditioned.

Impact on Historic Resources

The subject property is not listed on the 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 categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15311 (a), Class 11, of the State Implementation CEQA Guidelines in that the project involves the construction or replacement of minor accessory structures (painted mural) to commercial, industrial or institutional facilities.

FINDINGS:

- A. The plan for the proposed mural 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 proposed signs complement the architectural design of the buildings and are appropriately sized for visibility from the street and the pedestrian.
- B. The proposed mural 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 exterior paint, as detailed in the application submittal and as presented to the Architectural Review Board will be used.
- C. The proposed location of the mural is compatible with developments on land in the general area in that the mural activates the pedestrian space and compliments the architectural character of the building for a cohesive visual identification to the neighborhood.
- 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 building complies 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.

Summary

As conditioned the location, size, and context of the proposed mural in relation to the architecture of the existing building appropriately activates the pedestrian sphere and complements the architecture of the building.

CONDITIONS:

- 1. The total scope of the proposed mural shall be limited to that area on the first floor which was previously approved for a mural.
- 2. 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.
- 3. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall demonstrate that the sign plans comply with all applicable provisions of the sign program and sign 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.

4. Minor amendments to the commercial retail tenant sign area may be considered by staff review and approval based on the final number of commercial tenants and compliance with the total sign area allowed for the site (202.5 square feet).

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

Applicant's Submittal Material

[https://smgov365.sharepoint.com/teams/pcdsp/CityPlanning/ARB/STFRPT/SR20/20ARB-0091 \(1349 26th St\)/20ARB-0091 \(1349 26th St\).docx](https://smgov365.sharepoint.com/teams/pcdsp/CityPlanning/ARB/STFRPT/SR20/20ARB-0091%20(1349%2026th%20St)/20ARB-0091%20(1349%2026th%20St).docx)