



# Architectural Review Board Report

Architectural Review Board Meeting: June 8, 2020

Agenda Item: 7.3

To: Architectural Review Board

From: Rathar Duong, Associate Planner, ARB Liaison  
CC: Stephanie Reich, AIA, LEED AP, Design & Historic Preservation Planner  
Regina Szilak, ARB Liaison

Subject: 20ARB-0005 to review building design, colors, materials, and landscape plans for a new two-story with mezzanine level for a 6-unit multi-family residential condominium building.

Address: 1432 17<sup>th</sup> Street  
Applicant: Hamlet Zohrabians

## Recommended Action

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board approve application 20ARB-0005 based upon the findings and subject to the conditions contained within this report.

## Executive Summary

The proposed project is a new two-story, contemporary, six-unit townhouse style multi-family residential condominium building comprising of five market-rate units and one affordable unit each with a mezzanine and private roof deck. The new building is situated above a subterranean level providing 12 parking spaces and long-term bicycle parking accessible from the alley. The existing single-family residence will be demolished.

Staff recommends approval of the proposed building design, colors, materials, and landscaping with conditions and findings contained in this report.

## Background

The parcel is developed with a one-story single-family residence and porte-cochere constructed in 1959. No garage exists on site. The property is not listed on the Historic Resources Inventory and is proposed to be demolished.

The demolition application was reviewed by the Landmarks Commission on September 9, 2019 and no action was taken. The 75-day waiting period ended on November 3, 2019 and the demolition permit is ready to be issued upon approval of a replacement project.

On January 15, 2020, the Planning Commission approved the vesting tentative tract map for airspace subdivision for condominium purposes.

As part of the subdivision application, the project pursued the State Density Bonus allowing the development to construct one additional dwelling unit and qualified for two concessions from the development standards. The applicant is requesting a 10% increase above the maximum parcel coverage and exception to the required 4-foot wide unexcavated side yard.

**Project / Site Information**

The subject site is an interior lot located on the west side of 17<sup>th</sup> Street between Santa Monica Boulevard and Broadway. The parcel is surrounded by a mix of single-family residences and multi-family buildings located within close proximity to commercial/retail establishments along Santa Monica Boulevard and Broadway.

The following table provides a brief summary of project data:

Zoning District / Design Guidelines:	R2 (Low Density Residential)
Parcel Area (SF):	7,500 SF
Parcel Dimensions:	50' x 150'
Existing On-Site Improvements (Year Built):	Single-family residence (1959)
Historic Resource Inventory Status	Existing building is not listed on the HRI
CEQA	Exempt pursuant to Section 15061 (b)(3)
Adjacent Zoning & Use:	North R2 – Multi-Family Residential South R2 – Multi-Family Residential East R2 – Multi-Family Residential West R3 – Multi-Family Residential

**Analysis**

Site and Landscape Design

The rectilinear site is presently developed with a single-family residence and is proposed to be demolished to construct the proposed project. The proposed condominium building provides a total of six units; five market-rate units and one affordable unit situated above a subterranean parking garage for 12 spaces and long-term bicycle parking with access from the rear alley. The units are connected/stacked in a linear configuration and comply with the front, side and rear setback requirements. The front unit offers direct access to the street while the five rear units have entries facing the side, north property line as depicted on Sheet A2.1. Each unit is provided with outdoor living spaces including at-grade patios and upper level balconies. The building occupies much of the site with the exception of the required setback. The property will be enclosed with perimeter stucco walls as indicated on the site plan and as illustrated by the perspective drawings. It is unclear how the outside face of the walls will be finished along the neighbor’s property. A

prefinished material (i.e. polished block) or concrete may be more suited for this conditions in order to obtain a finished look on both sides of the wall. A condition is proposed.

The front yard is enclosed with low 42-inch high walls and two gates that is divided into two sections as illustrated by the perspective drawings. Approximately half of the yard is private outdoor space for the front, street-facing unit, while the second half is intended to be a landscape passthrough to the rear units. The dividing wall compartmentalizes the front yard into smaller areas and visually interferes with the open appearance of the front yard. If defined areas are intended, it can be visually accomplished with an alternative landscape design through appropriate plant selection and placement as well as integration of seating areas in strategic location(s). A condition has been added for consideration by the Board for the removal of the dividing wall.

Landscaping is incorporated throughout the site, in the front setback and in areas not occupied by the building, pathways/driveway, and patios. A drought tolerant palette is proposed and provides a diversity of plant materials to complement the building design. The palette is highlighted by Parkinsonia 'Desert Museum' (Palo Verde Tree), Heteromeles arbutifolia (Toyon Tree), Dodonaea viscosa (Hopseed Bush) and a variety of low growing shrubs, and ground covers such as Agave "Blue Flame", Dietes bicolor (Fortnight Lily) Alyogyne huegelii (Blue Hibiscus), Festuca californica (California fescue) and Senecio serpens (Blue senecio).

The placement and layering of the plant species creates an attractive landscape design that complements the building design (L-1). The proposed landscape and patio in the front setback create a transparent appearance and allow the building to engage the street. Trees and bushes along the side property lines ensure adequate buffer between properties for the residents and provide privacy to/from the adjoining neighbors. The Hopseed Bush in the front and side setback along the property lines provides an effective privacy screen, but can get overly tall if unmaintained/trimmed and will exceed the allowable height. Hedges along the side property lines are limited to eight feet high, while hedges within the front setback may not exceed 42" high, the same height limit as fences, gates, and walls. A condition has been added for the continued maintenance of the hedges to achieve compliance.

#### Building Design/Architectural Concept

The proposed building is contemporary in design expressed in simple volumes and clean lines and is enhanced further by the modern material and color palette. The building concept is a skillful play of projecting and recessed forms within an overall volume that are highlighted by various materials and colors. The modulated volumes are highlighted with horizontal Hardie-plank siding or stucco resulting in an interconnected geometric pattern particularly on the west elevation. While the intended layering creates visual interest, the change in plan appear too minimal to produce the desired effect. A condition has been added to increase the change in plane to a minimum of 18" to for a three-dimensional solution. The application of the siding on the east elevation is more controlled and employed as a framing element on some selected ground floor windows as illustrated on Sheet A4.1 and A4.2. The alternating and layering of stucco and siding is applied throughout the building to strengthen the overall building design. The combination flat

and shed roof design will be covered in standing seam metal roof that integrates private roof decks (Sheet A2.6). Each deck is accessed via a 10-foot high enclosed stairway. Metal trellises are also incorporated into the roof deck design. The proposed design is straightforward and communicates a clear architectural concept.

**Mass and Scale**

The perceived mass and scale are addressed through the composition of various projecting and receding volumes along all elevations as well as the change of colors and materials at appropriate location. This approach breaks down the massing while providing a cohesive design. This treatment allows the building to take on a 3-dimensional quality. The appropriateness of the mass and scale is further supported by the sensible placement of the windows and their arrangement on the façades. As identified above, the change in plan should be further developed in order to be effective as a three-dimensional strategy.

**Design, Details and Materials**

The contemporary building will be clad with a simple material and color palette of smooth stucco, horizontal Hardie plank siding, standing seam metal roof, and bronze color fiberglass windows and entry doors. Additional features and detailing that will help unify the design includes metal clad fascia, painted metal trellises and railing, and pre-cast cornices/caps and window sills. These finishes will be in either white or dark bronze to achieve contrast and crispness to the design. The material palette and color scheme are high quality and complement the building design. To achieve a streamlined appearance around the window/door openings, nail-on installation method shall be utilized throughout the building.

<b>DESIGN ELEMENTS</b>	<b>PROPOSED EXTERIOR MATERIAL, FINISH AND COLOR</b>
Façade	Smooth stucco (white) Hardi-plank siding ( brown, Dunn Edwards Shaggy Bark)
Windows/sliding doors	Fiberglass (dark bronze)
Entry Doors	Painted fiber glass (dark bronze) to match windows
Roof	Standing seam metal (bronze)
Railing	Painted metal
Lighting	Wall sconces (pre-finished dark bronze)
Canopy/Awning/ Trellis	Painted metal (dark bronze) for canopy/balcony and trellis at roof deck
Gates	Painted metal (dark bronze)
Fencing	Smooth stucco over concrete block (white)

**Impact on Historic Resources**

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

**Code Compliance**

This application has only 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 proposed contemporary style condominium building will replace an existing single-family residence on site and accommodates six residential dwelling units comprising of five market-rate units and one affordable unit configured in a townhouse style. The two-story building with a mezzanine level sits above a subterranean parking level that provides 12 parking spaces and long-term bicycle parking. The project incorporates high quality materials that enhance various features of the building. The proposed landscape palette is diverse and drought tolerant and its design complements the building's architecture.

### **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 proposed contemporary building expresses a simple and clear architectural concept that will add to the eclectic design found within the immediate neighborhood. The landscape design incorporates a diverse drought tolerant plant palette that complements the building and buffers the property from adjoining land uses, while providing some privacy to each unit and outdoor spaces.
- 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 materials such as smooth stucco, fiberglass windows and doors, Hardi-plank siding and standing seam metal roof are proposed 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 perceived mass and scale are appropriately addressed through various design techniques, including use of colors, materials, fenestration pattern, and building form. The proposed design is compatible with surrounding developments as other contemporary buildings exist in the neighborhood and new landscape design will enhance the overall development. The proposed project is also compliant with the Zoning Ordinance in regards to the number of units, setback, height, and parking requirements.

- 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. Changes in plane shall be a minimum of 18 inches, and plan details where materials meet shall be provided for staff to review and approve prior to plan check submittal.
2. Hedges in the front yard and side property lines shall be maintained to comply with the maximum height limit of 42” high in the front setback and 8 feet high along the side property line.
3. A prefinished material (i.e. polished block) or concrete shall be used in lieu of the stucco wall in order to achieve a finished look on both sides of the wall.
4. The low wall that divides the front yard shall be removed to maintain an open appearance. If defined areas are desired, it shall be accomplished through an appropriate landscape design, including integration of seating area(s) and shall be provided to staff for review and approval prior to plan check submittal.
5. The thin profile of the new window openings shall be achieved through the nail-on installation method as proposed by the applicant to maintain consistency with the contemporary design and thin profile of the existing aluminum windows. Retrofit windows and installation method shall not be utilized.
6. 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.
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.

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

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