



Architectural Review Board Report

Architectural Review Board Meeting: June 15, 2020

Agenda Item: 7.2

To: Architectural Review Board

From: James Combs, Associate Planner

Cc: Stephanie Reich, AIA, LEED AP, Design & Historic Preservation Planner

Subject: 20ARB-0138 to review building design, colors, and materials for a new two-story duplex with subterranean parking.

Address: 2714 Highland Avenue

Applicant: Gregory H. Ginter

Recommended Action

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board approve application 20ARB-0138 based upon the findings and subject to the conditions contained within this report.

Executive Summary

Proposed is a 3,586 SF two-story duplex with subterranean parking and new landscape. The proposed is a contemporary design, conceived of as a two forms or “bars”, a solid and void bar with full length projecting balcony. The proposed design is set back beyond the minimum required front yard setback and is elevated approximately 8 feet above the sidewalk above a front facing subterranean garage.

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

Background

The parcel was originally developed in 1912 with extensive modifications having been taken place. The existing building was identified as a potential contributor to the 2600-2700 block of the Highland Historic District; however, the area is no longer eligible as an historic district. In 2019 the Landmarks Commission reviewed and approved a demolition permit for the subject property.

Project / Site Information

The mid-block property is located within the OP2 zoning district along Highland Avenue, north of Pearl Street. Properties in the surrounding area are developed with a mix of single-unit, duplex, and multi-unit buildings.

The following table provides a brief summary of project data:

Zoning District / Design Guidelines:	OP2 (Ocean Park - Low Density Residential) District
Parcel Area (SF):	4,708 SF

Parcel Dimensions:	100' x 47.5' (irregular)
Existing On-Site Improvements (Year Built):	Single-unit dwelling (1912)
Historic Resources Inventory Status	The existing building is listed on the HRI with a status code of 6L.
CEQA	Exempt pursuant to Section 15061 (b)(3)
Adjacent Zoning & Use:	North: OP2 – Ocean Park - Low Density Residential South: OP2 East: OP2 West: OP2

Analysis

Site and Landscape Design

The site slopes up steeply for the first 30 feet of the lot and flattens out at the existing building pad. The overall elevation change between the sidewalk and the rear setback is less than 10 feet. The site is currently developed with a one-story single-unit residence without a garage. The proposed duplex includes excavating the front yard for a driveway, to access a subterranean garage approximately 20 feet back from the property line. Terraced retaining walls leading away from both the sidewalk and the driveway may not exceed 42 inches per code. Stairs on both side property lines provide pedestrian access to the units.

The terraced front yard is planted with a variety of flowering plants and shrubs crowned with three Southern Magnolia trees (*Magnolia grandiflora*) on the uppermost terrace. Proposed retaining walls will be poured in place with a stucco parge surface. The terraced approach works to create outdoor space for the new building while managing the existing slope in a way to be a friendly to the streetscape as possible. A condition has been added to provide vine planting that will spill over the planter and soften the retaining walls.

The rear yard landscape is largely displaced with pavers making up a new patio wrapping all four sides of the proposed duplex. The primary landscaped in the back yard is the 157 SF of Tall Fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*) bordered by Bird of Paradise (*Strelizia reginae*) in the northeast corner. Flax (*Phormium tenax*) and Coast Rosemary (*Westringia fruticosa*) dominate the border garden along the property line. A multi-trunk King Palm (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*) is proposed in both the north and south corners of the back yard. The proposed landscape area appears to meet, but is close to, the minimum 25% landscape requirements. A condition of approval has been included allowing for slight increases in landscape area that may exceed 150 SF in the event changes are required during building permit plan check.

An edible garden of fruits and herbs is proposed in addition to the required ground level landscape. The roof garden is planted along the north, south and portion of the east roof deck providing additional privacy.

The proposed drought tolerant landscape provides privacy, shade and a variety of heights ranging from groundcovers to trees. The landscape is appropriate for the site and for the surrounding neighborhood.

Building Design/Architectural Concept

The design concept clearly expresses a solid and void bar shifted in plan from one another with projecting 2nd and roof level balconies wrapping the void form (the south and east elevations.)

Mass and Scale

The proposed building is a two-story core with articulation provided by the second and roof level wraparound balconies / eaves along the west, east, and south elevations. While balconies on the front project to the front yard setback, the primary mass of the core is significantly set back. While staff believes that the massing is adequately addressed on most facades, the north elevation is a single plane and could use additional articulation or visual interest. A condition of approval has been included to provide additional articulation or visual interest to the north facade.

Design, Details and Materials

The contemporary finishes including the aluminum windows, perforated metal rooftop screening, and glass guardrails are appropriate for the proposed design and complement the neighborhood. The varied materials are most prominently used on the south elevation where the projected elements attach to the building core. The proposed siding appears to be a fiber cement board stained and textured to appear as a wood material, which the Board has discouraged. A condition of approval has been included requiring that the siding be changed to an “authentic” material either fiber cement board or wood siding. Gray stone tiles are used on the stair and elevator forms so they stand out from the core.

Casement, awning, and fixed aluminum windows in a bronze anodized finish are proposed throughout the new building. The fenestration, proportion, and alignment of the proposed windows are generally appropriate on all elevations. The clean details provided in the plans will be essential to implement the proposed simple design.

As conditioned, the material palette and color scheme are high quality and complement the building design.

DESIGN ELEMENTS	PROPOSED EXTERIOR MATERIAL, FINISH AND COLOR
Façade	Stone tile and fiber cement siding
Windows	Aluminum windows (Color: bronze anodized). Casement, awning, and fixed.
Doors	Aluminum and glass doors.
Roof	Flat roof.
Lighting	Wall Sconces.
Fencing	Proposed 8' tall 2" wide vertical wood siding Poured in place retaining walls with a stucco parge treatment.

Impact on Historic Resources

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

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 project is a new two-story duplex with subterranean parking achieving a sensible mass and scale to the existing neighborhood with varied materials. The contemporary design has a clear design concept and, as conditioned, a three-dimensional quality. The reserved materials and clean lines complement the existing building. The existing landscape will be updated to create a more drought tolerant and usable outdoor area.

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 clear architectural idea and complements the neighborhood. The landscape design incorporates a diverse drought tolerant plant palette that complements the building while buffering the property from adjoining land uses.
- 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 fiber cement board, aluminum windows, and parged stucco, will be incorporated into the building design as proposed in the application submittal and as presented to the Architectural Review Board. These finishes and associated color scheme support and enhance the contemporary building design and its three-dimensional quality.
- C. The proposed design is compatible with surrounding developments as other contemporary buildings exist in the neighborhood. As shown, the proposed addition will be compliant with the Zoning Ordinance in terms of setback and parcel coverage, and height and no deviation from Code is requested.
- 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. Should additional landscape be required during building permit plan check staff shall review additional landscape or landscape modifications required to meet the 25% minimum landscape requirement of the OP2 Zoning District.
2. Prior to building permit submittal, the proposed siding shall be changed to an “authentic material”. An authentic material shall be either a cement siding without a pattern or color mimicking wood, or a true, clear, wood siding as reviewed and approved by staff.
3. Prior to building permit submittal, the north elevation shall be modified to incorporate some modulation, elements of texture creating shadow, or other methods to increase visual interest.
4. Vine or other planting shall be included in the terraced planter at the front to spill over the planter walls and soften the appearance from the street.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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

[https://smgov365.sharepoint.com/teams/pcdsp/CityPlanning/ARB/STFRPT/SR20/20ARB-0138\(2714 Highland\)/20ARB-0138 \(2714 Highland\).docx](https://smgov365.sharepoint.com/teams/pcdsp/CityPlanning/ARB/STFRPT/SR20/20ARB-0138(2714 Highland)/20ARB-0138 (2714 Highland).docx)