



Architectural Review Board Report

Architectural Review Board Meeting: July 20, 2020

Agenda Item: 7.2

To: Architectural Review Board
From: Michael Rocque, Associate Planner
CC: Stephanie Reich, AIA, LEED AP, Design and Historic Preservation Planner
Subject: 20ARB-0130 to approve the building design, colors, materials, landscape plan and sign program for the construction of a new Tier 2, 6-story, mixed-use building with approximately 2,725 square feet of ground floor commercial space with 94 SRO units and 26 residential units over four levels of subterranean parking.

The application was reviewed on June 15, 2020

Address: 1338 5th Street
Applicant: WS Communities

Recommended Action

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board approve application 20ARB-0100 based upon the findings and subject to the conditions contained within this report.

Executive Summary

The proposal is a Tier 2, 6-story, 52,436 square foot mixed-use building with approximately 2,725 square feet of ground floor commercial space with 94 SRO units and 26 residential units on a 14,985 square foot parcel in Downtown. The project includes four levels of subterranean parking levels with 116 non-required automobile parking spaces and (16 short-term and 124 long-term) bicycle parking spaces. The 15,000 square foot site is located along the west side of 5th Street and is currently developed with a surface level parking lot. The main façade along 5th Street presents a modern design creates two main building forms each containing a scalloped pattern of balconies surrounded by a white frame. The base draws more directly from the immediate context of larger scale architectural forms by incorporating a 2-story urban base.

The subject request was previously presented to the Architectural Review Board on June 15, 2020. Also, as reported previously this project is subject to a settlement agreement and is entitled to expedited processing. Specifically, the settlement agreement does not affect the ARB's discretion, but requires the ARB issue a determination for the project within ninety (90) calendar days from the final date of approval for the Administrative Approval (AA) for this project. The AA for this project was approved on February 13, 2020. Due to the on-going public COVID-19 pandemic the final ARB determination date has been revised to August 1, 2020. And, in the event of an appeal (or appeals) of the ARB's

design review determination(s) to the Planning Commission, a hearing shall be scheduled within sixty (60) days, and final determination must be issued for the appealed project(s) within thirty (30) days following the submittal of the appeal(s), in accordance with the Santa Monica Municipal Code.

The ARB Board supported the direction of the project. However, they noted that the project could be further refined in several areas. In response, the project has substantially revised the design to address the Board's comments as summarized below:

Board Comments and Applicant Responses

- *Modify the frames to enhance the reading of the volumes and enhance the ground floor by bringing the frame down at the southeast corner and integrate with the balconies that are the shorter bays. Frames should be developed so that the base is defined more clearly providing consistency in dimension and hierarchy.*

The design response presents a straightforward idea with the frame width at the upper masses at 1'-8", while the frame width of the 2-story base was increased to 2'-2" wide. This frame is also expressed along the bottom of the mass as a raised curb and series of built-in raised planters. The overall impression is of a framed mass similar to those above, yet slightly larger to account for its use and location and infilled with glazing rather than balconies to reflect its retail nature.

Additionally, the second-floor slab within this frame has been pulled back to allow for a continuous storefront from Ground level to 2nd floor ceiling, with spandrel glass in front of the 2nd floor slab while the storefront glazing serves to strengthen the 2-story nature of this massing. The scale of the two-story base is differentiated from the residential above, and relates well to the larger-scale buildings adjacent. The frame of this mass was modified to be clad in dark grey metal panels, which turn the south corner and extend to the ground floor courtyard wall and the glazing at the Leasing office was pulled back from the building frontage line to allow for thickness of the north leg of the frame to be read more strongly.

Street level retail awnings were replaced with recessed entries and wall-mounted signage. These entries are articulated by wall-mounted sconces, metal panel ceilings, specialty paving and potted plants.

- *Consider enlarging the balconies facing the street by providing 12-18 inches at the narrow corner with a less acute angle. Doors should swing into the units or provide sliders where possible.*

The balconies have been redesigned to increase the balcony depth which now ranges from 1'-6" at the narrowest point to 3'-8" at all outward facing balconies, with greater depth at the courtyard-facing balconies. Additionally, all balcony doors have been changed to inswing doors. The applicant has noted that they did explore sliders as well, however they were not aware of any sliding door manufacturers that offer a product which can meet both the ADA and CBC threshold requirement.

- *Consider the geometry at the roof line, for example, angle the roof parapet similar to the balconies.*

Due to the change of the balcony geometry, the geometry at the has been simplified to create a frame around the main residential floors with balconies that create a basket weave/egg-crate effect. The trellis design at the west roof deck has also been simplified and is not visible from street. The result is a more coherent, legible and simple design.

- *Consider providing additional landscaping at the street and at the east roof deck.*

There does not appear to be additional landscaping at the street. The at grade planting and planting pots remain relatively the same with some areas in fact becoming slightly smaller in area. A condition has been added to provide in-ground planting where there is space to do so. At the east roof deck, this area has been enlarged by approximately 340 square feet providing an ample amount of social and gathering space for both guest and residents to enjoy.



Rendering, June 15, 2020



Revised Rendering, July 20, 2020

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.

Summary

The proposal is a Tier 2, 6-story, 52,436 square foot mixed-use building with approximately 2,725 square feet of ground floor commercial space with 94 SRO units and 26 residential units on a 14,985 square foot parcel in Downtown. The project includes four levels of subterranean parking levels with 116 non-required automobile parking spaces and (16 short-term and 124 long-term) bicycle parking spaces. The proposed building design provides a modern infill project that activates the pedestrian frontage along the 1300 block of 5th Street with retail spaces and building entries. The main façade along 5th Street presents a modern design creates two main building forms each containing a scalloped pattern of balconies surrounded by a white frame. The base draws more directly from the immediate context of larger scale architectural forms by incorporating a 2-story urban base. Staff recommends approval as conditioned.

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 modern infill project with units arranged around an open courtyard while also providing an active storefront at the street frontage. The main façade along 5th Street provides three-dimensionality expressed by zig zagging balconies creating a basket weave (or eggcrate) effect for a coherent, legible design concept.
- 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, grey and white acrylic plaster with a smooth finish on all exterior walls, metal rainscreen panel system, glass frameless railing and 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 mass, scale, configuration, and sidewalls are all complementary to the adjacent buildings.
- 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. Prior to plan check submittal, architectural details which include, canopies/trellis, residential units, storefront head, and balconies shall be provided for staff review and approval.
2. Prior to plan check submittal, all proposed dark grey aluminum and vinyl windows shall provide details, cut sheet and sample to ensure high level of quality.
3. Prior to plan check submittal, the applicant shall provide details of exterior metal frame elements material transitions (at corners, etc.) and other typical and unique details subject to staff review and approval.
4. Prior to plan check submittal, the applicant shall provide in-ground planting at the ground floor street frontage with corresponding details.
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.
9. No building permit shall be issued for the project until the developer complies with the requirements of the Santa Monica Municipal Code with respect to applicable fees. No building permit shall be issued for the project until the developer complies with the requirements of Part 9.30.040 of the Santa Monica Municipal Code, Private Developer Cultural Arts Requirement.

If the developer elects to comply with these requirements by providing on-site public art work or cultural facilities, no final City approval shall be granted until such time as the Director of the Community and Cultural Services Department issues a notice of compliance in accordance with Part 9.30.050

10. No building permit shall be issued for the project until the developer complies with the requirements of Chapter 9.72 of the Santa Monica Municipal Code, the Child Care Linkage Program.

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

- A. Revised Project Plans
- B. Applicant's Submittal Material (June 15, 2020)
- C. June 15, 2020 Staff Report