



Architectural Review Board Report

Architectural Review Board Meeting: October 19, 2020

Agenda Item: 7.1

To: Architectural Review Board
From: Scott Albright, Senior Planner
Cc: Stephanie Reich, AIA, LEED AP, Design & Historic Preservation Planner
James Combs, ARB Liaison
Subject: 19ARB-0300 to approve the building design, colors, materials, and landscape plans for a new two-story, Jeep automobile dealership/showroom with ancillary auto repair service and three levels of basement area and subterranean parking.

The application was last reviewed on February 18, 2020.

Address: 1802 Santa Monica Boulevard
Applicant: PLUS Architects

Recommended Action

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board approve application 19ARB-0300 based upon the findings and subject to the conditions contained within this report.

Executive Summary

Proposed is a new automobile dealership with an ancillary service area within a new three-story, 32,253 square-foot building, with three levels of basement area and 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 has been revised in response to input received from the Architectural Review Board, Planning Commission, and City staff. Staff recommends approval of the building design and landscape plans.

Board Comments and Applicant Response

During its deliberation on October 21, 2019, the Board engaged in discussion regarding the project design and expressed appreciation for the significant improvements that the design has undergone since it had been presented during Preliminary Design Review. While there was positive consensus about the broad concept and design direction, and the efforts to respond to neighborhood concerns, the Board concluded that additional adjustments to the plans were necessary and provided the following comments:

Concern: The appearance of the parapet element is too massive and bulky. The applicant should consider minimizing or eliminating the parapet at the corner to enhance the cantilever element.

Response: The height dimension of the proposed roof parapet would be reduced from six feet to 3'-6". The prior plans included a blue glass band that added unnecessary mass and height to the building. This band has been removed. All of the glazing would be clear glass with UV protection.

Concern: Fugitive light spillage should be minimized or eliminated from adjacent properties, with particular attention to the adjacent residential neighborhood.

Response: The elevations (Sheets A3.1 and A3.2) indicate the location of proposed exterior wall sconces and further note a style and brand to be utilized. While this information provides some clarity as to lighting locations, further information is necessary to fully review safeguards provided to avoid fugitive lighting from spilling onto adjacent properties. Staff is recommending a condition of approval requiring the applicant to provide greater detail of the proposed lighting for staff's review and approval.

Concern: The interface of the proposed coffee shop with the outdoor gathering space and the public sidewalks particularly along Santa Monica Boulevard should be better integrated.

Response: The interior coffee shop is now directly connected to outdoor public gathering area by means of a double door. This exterior space abuts the public sidewalks along Santa Monica Boulevard and 18th Street. A glass rail defines the extent of the private space while the use of clear glazing maintains a visual connection with the public sidewalk. Gingko trees within decorative pots provide added interest.

Concern: The public entry to the community room is unremarkable and needs to be given more visual prominence. The space itself should be enhanced to become a better, more useable community benefit.

Response: The main entry to the proposed community room off 18th Street was modified with a larger glass door that is protected by a glass awning above. Both the first and second floor lobbies to this space have expanded in size, and the community room itself is a large 1,096 square feet in size. An outdoor deck space, approximately 324 square feet in size, is also available for use. Larger windows in both the stairwell and the community room itself add additional natural light and add visual prominence to the community room amenity. A rest room is also provided in the space for the comfort of community members utilizing the space.

Concern: Consider enhancing the proposed landscaping throughout the entire site, including the rear portions of the property adjacent to the existing residential development.

Response: Enhanced landscaping has been provided throughout the site. 24" box Autumn gold Maidenhair trees (Gingko bilboa) and Strawberry trees (Arbutus "marina") are the featured trees of significant size. Uniquely shaped landscape planters add contrast to the overall orthogonal design of the building. 15-gallon

Yellow-wood trees (*Podocarpus elongatus*) will help to act as a screen along the rear property line adjacent to the residential development.

In addition to these specific suggestions, the applicant has also voluntarily recessed the proposed Glass pop-out on the first floor an additional two feet to provide more area for green space and landscaping. Also, the large freestanding ground level “Jeep” sign was relocated to the interior of the building which helps to reduce the ground-floor level clutter along the Santa Monica Boulevard elevation.

Code Compliance

In the processing of the project’s development review permit, staff conducted extensive preliminary review for compliance with the Zoning Code, including the base district’s development standards, urban automobile dealership standards and Tier 2 requirements. There do not appear to be outstanding issues that could potentially affect the plans and result in significant changes to the project’s design. A complete code-compliance review will occur when 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 an urban infill project that qualifies for CEQA exemption pursuant to the provisions set forth in Section 15158.3 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Summary

The applicant has thoughtfully responded to the Board’s prior comments and has made significant improvements to the project design. The revised design thoughtfully responds to its location along Santa Monica Boulevard by creating a pleasant environment that will serve its purpose as an auto dealer, but still present design features and qualities that are an overall enhancement to the streetscape and improve its pedestrian orientation. The design concept is clear and is cohesively applied to the project. The proposed design is recommended for approval subject to the findings for approval a below, and subject to the conditions outlined, including the submittal of more complete lighting plans.

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 its design is an automobile dealership designed in an urban format that includes varied massing, patterns of solid and transparent forms, and pedestrian-oriented ground floor showroom space. The design employs a palette of high quality materials and varying forms that are appropriate for an auto dealership in an urban setting.
- 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 the building will use high quality material such as broad board concrete, planters, dual pane insulated glass, a combination of decorative metal materials, and outdoor spaces that exceeds requirements, as

detailed in the application submittal and as presented to the Architectural Review Board.

- C. The proposed design of the building or structure is compatible with developments on land in the general area in that it is similar in height and massing to other area developments along Santa Monica Boulevard and within its context adjacent to a lower density residential neighborhood. The building is consistent with the design and use objectives articulated in the Land Use & Circulation Element (LUCE) for the General Commercial district in which it is located.
- 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, the applicant shall submit for staff’s review and approval additional lighting detail including mitigation to avoid light glare on adjacent properties to the greatest extent feasible.
- 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.
- 3. 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.
- 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 SMMC 9.61.100.

Attachments

- A. Applicant’s Submittal Material

