



Architectural Review Board Report

Architectural Review Board Meeting: October 19, 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-0157 to approve the building design, colors materials, landscape plan and a sign program for the construction of a new 8-story, mixed use building with 1,018 square feet of ground floor commercial retail space, 50 deed restricted affordable residential dwelling units, and two levels of subterranean basement storage and utility area.

The application was reviewed on August 17, 2020

Address: 1514 7th Street
Applicant: WS Communities

Recommended Action

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board (ARB) approve application 20ARB-0157 based upon the findings and subject to the conditions contained within this report.

Executive Summary

The proposal is an eight-story, 29,972 square foot mixed-use building with approximately 1,018 square feet of ground floor commercial space and 50 affordable residential units on a 7,493 square foot parcel in Downtown. The project includes two levels of subterranean basement storage and utility area with 89 (11 short-term and 78 long-term) bicycle parking spaces. The project site is located along the west side of 7th Street and is currently a vacant lot. The design concept has been revised consisting of main building forms; a 7-story mass that sits forward of an 8-story recessed mass that are mirror images of each other (refer to diagram G012). The proposal expresses a contemporary design with a clear concept compatible with the mixed-use developments in the immediate area.

The subject request was previously presented to the Architectural Review Board on August 17, 2020.



ARB Review August 17, 2020



Current Proposal

While the ARB was generally supportive of the project, there was also agreement that the project should be improved in ways that were not possible to properly condition. The ARB provided specific direction including:

- The design concept could be simplified, made more formal and yet playful;
- The recessed element could extend to the roof;
- A tripartite division may be too much for a 50-foot wide lot;
- Provide improvement in the relationship to the street and materiality; and
- Aspects of the previous design such as the layered idea potentially could be re-incorporated and the design concept should not create a false or local symmetry.

The applicant has revised the submittal to address the Board's comments as summarized below:

Board Comments and Applicant Responses

- *The design concept could be simplified, made more formal and yet playful as it relates to the existing streetscape.*

The design concept has been revised to feature a 7-story building form sitting forward of an 8-story building form mirroring each other as illustrated in the Diagram on sheet G012. The front façade of each mass is composed of thick horizontal bands at the floor plates which are articulated across the full expanse of the façade connected at each edge by 1' thick walls. Each vertical form has a large recessed balcony in a large bay and flush windows on a smaller bay, separated by a pier clad in horizontal siding. The current design concept provides a clear concept, with greater simplicity than the previous iteration. The revision to two more simple forms creates a clean and well-proportioned design.

- *The recessed element could be cut into the building extending to the roof.*

The design has been reconfigured to express two staggered vertical forms, the central recessed element has been removed altogether for a more holistic and successful design.

- *Fifty-foot wide lots should not be divided into thirds as the façade appears busy and un-proportional.*

As stated above the modified and new façade design presents two distinct and well-defined masses and provides a stronger relationship to the streetscape. The simplified use of materials, stronger horizontality, and clean detailing results in a clear concept and well-proportioned building that relates well to the surrounding built environment.

- *Improvement in the relationship to the street and materiality and that aspects of the previous design such as the layered idea potentially could be re-incorporated.*



The relationship to the street has been better articulated through the layering of horizontal awnings and with a significantly increased amount of transparent frontage. The horizontal bands and outer edges of each mass will be clad in acrylic plaster and is highlighted with the additional use of horizontal fiber cement shiplap siding as well as metal rails with a perforated metal panel inset. The recessed form creates a larger outdoor space in front of the residential lobby, providing an opportunity for additional planting.

- *The design concept should not create a false or local symmetry.*

The design concept has been modified so the two forms create a balanced, asymmetrical design. The revised design also features greater horizontality and increases the area of required setbacks as it relates to modulation requirements of the DCP.



Rendering, August 17, 2020



Revised Rendering, October 19, 2020

Impact on Historic Resources

The subject property is vacant and not listed on the City's Historic Resources Inventory.

Code Compliance

This application has been approved under an Administrative Approval and has been 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 new, 8-story, 29,972 square foot mixed-use building with approximately 1,018 square feet of ground floor commercial space and 50 affordable residential units on a 7,493 square foot parcel in Downtown. The proposed building design provides a modern infill project that activates the pedestrian frontage along the 1500 block of 7th Street. The proposal expresses a contemporary that appears to be compatible with the mixed-use developments in the immediate area. 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 along 7th Street that is separated into two main volumes with the front mass sitting on the ground plane and rear mass being shifted upward one story so that the masses are offset from each other both in plan and elevation while also providing an active storefront at the street frontage.
- 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, smooth finish acrylic plaster, metal panels to enhance the formal geometry with clear glass guardrails, aluminum storefront system 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. Landscaping should be further developed and refined for review and approval by staff prior to plan check submittal:
 - a. The patios at the ground floor shall have access to lightwell
 - b. Provide vines at the south end to provide more greenery to the space
 - c. Clarify and refine the design of the sixth-floor deck
2. The dark grey window frames at the storefront shall be consistent in both plan and elevation. Details to be provided for staff review and approval prior to plan check submittal.
3. On the north elevation, the two outside vertical wall sections shall be white smooth acrylic plaster to provide consistency and a holistic approach to all building elevations.
4. Prior to plan check submittal, provide operable windows at the entry side of all units wherever possible.
5. The balcony edge details shall be metal panel with concealed fasteners as shown. Metal shall be a gauge sufficient not to “oil-can”.
6. All proposed vinyl windows shall provide details, cut sheet and sample to ensure high level of quality.
7. All material transitions should be carefully detailed, with particular attention at outside corners.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.

11. 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.
12. 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

13. 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 Section 9.61.100.

Attachments

- A. Applicant's Submittal Material (October 2, 2020)
- B. August 17, 2020 Staff Report