



Architectural Review Board Report

Architectural Review Board Meeting: October 19, 2020

Agenda Item: 8.1

To: Architectural Review Board
From: Ross Fehrman, AICP, Associate Planner
CC: Stephanie Reich, AIA, LEED AP, Design and Historic Preservation Planner
Subject: Preliminary review of a new Tier 2, three-story, two-unit residential development with one level of semi-subterranean parking. The proposed project is located in the Medium-Density Residential (R3) zone district and is associated with 16ENT-0112 (Development Review Permit) and 16ENT-0113 (Front Setback Variance).
Address: 1665 Appian Way
Applicant: Ralph Mechur

Recommended Action

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board review the project design and provide preliminary comments to assist in the development of the project prior to review by the Planning Commission.

Executive Summary

Proposed is a new Tier 2, 5,774 SF, three-story, 40-foot high residential development consisting of two units with one level of semi-subterranean parking. The contemporary building design has been oriented to face Appian Way, featuring a predominately glazed façade, and has multiple integrated upper-story outdoor spaces. Pursuant to the SMMC Section 9.40.020 (A)(1), any project that exceeds Tier 1 maximum limits requires a Development Review Permit (DRP). Additionally, the applicant is seeking approval of a Variance to reduce the front setback from 30' to 15'. A preliminary design review by the Architectural Review Board is required to provide design recommendations prior to review by the Planning Commission. The project will return to the Board for final design review after the DRP and Variance applications are approved.

Project / Site Information

The project site is located on the corner of Appian Way and Pacific Terrace, with the front of the parcel located on the Arcadia Terrace walk-street. The site is currently developed with a two-story, four-unit residential building built in 1914 that is identified on the HRI and is proposed to be demolished. The surrounding parcels to the north and east are similarly developed as multi-unit residential of two or more stories, to the south is the Loews Hotel, and to the west is a beach parking lot.

The following table provides a brief summary of project data:

Zoning District	Medium-Density Residential (R3)
Parcel Area (SF):	4,414 SF
Parcel Dimensions:	~50' W x ~90' D
Existing On-Site Improvements (Year Built):	Two-story, four-unit residential development (1914)
Historic Resource Inventory Status	Existing development is on the HRI
Adjacent Zoning & Use:	North R3 – Multi-Unit Residential South OF -Loews Hotel East R3 – Multi-Unit Residential West R3/OS – Multi-Unit Residential/Parking lot

Analysis

As previously mentioned, the proposal is seeking approval of a Variance to reduce the front setback from 30' to 15' along Arcadia Terrace. If approved, this will also affect other development standards, such as a 45-degree daylight plane that starts at 35' above the front setback and the requirement of the third story to be setback an additional average of 10' from the second floor front façade, as they are measured based on the location of the front setback. The proposal incorporates the requested Variance into the design and all subsequent changes, but if not approved entirely or if only approved partially, the proposed design will change substantially.

Site Design

The proposal is unique as it has three main facades that are visible from the public right-of-way (Arcadia Terrace (front), Appian Way (west side), and Pacific Terrace (rear)) and will form part of the entrance to the private Arcadia Terrace walk-street. Access into the semi-subterranean garage is proposed from Appian Way and access into the two units is along the east side of the parcel.

The project is designed with its primary façade oriented towards Appian Way. Outdoor spaces have been incorporated into each of the three stories, which have been largely been positioned to face the ocean view. Additionally, two swimming pools and a roof deck are proposed. A significant east-to-west grade change starts east of the project site at Ocean Avenue leveling out at Appian Way. This grade change has resulted in the subject parcel being approximately 13' lower in elevation than the parcel immediately to the east. Additionally, due to this elevation change, the proposed development had been designed to have its first floor sit approximately 6+' above the elevation of the public right-of-way along Appian Way. This elevated ground floor presents a challenge for the pedestrian-orientation of the project.

Building Design/Architectural Concept

The proposed development has a contemporary design with horizontal lines defining the floors and units. While the subject site has three facades that can be seen from the public right-of-way, the building design has largely been oriented west along the Appian way

frontage to take advantage of ocean views. This main façade is comprised of a mix of windows and glass doors opening onto terraces on all three floors. The other facades (north, south, and east) continue to use glazing and similar materials, but to a much lesser extent compared to the west elevation. While this has the potential to provide a clear solid/void concept, the proposal could improve by additional clarity of concept.

Mass and Scale

The proposed development is a three-story, 40' high structure with a semi-subterranean garage. The first and second floor, which start more than 6' above the adjacent grade along Appian Way, are uniform in massing and scale. Pursuant to development standards, the third floor has been set back 15' from the northern façade of the second floor. Additionally, to incorporate a mezzanine, the third floor is substantially taller (17'-4") compared to the other two floors (9'-10"). This has resulted in the building as a whole to be oddly proportioned. The Board may wish to discuss options for improving the scale and proportion of the overall design.

Design, Details, and Materials

The project design is fairly simple and straightforward, the west façade is primarily glass, with increasing amounts of solid (stucco) on north, south and east elevations. Materials used are a mix of aluminum framed glazing, smooth stucco, copper panels, and wood railings and sun-screens. The Board may wish to consider materials or strategies to provide additional texture, shade, and shadow around the building.

Landscape Design

While a landscape plan has not been provided, landscaping is proposed along the perimeter of the parcel and in a series of tiered planters along Appian Way, which has been designed to be the main façade. Additionally, built-in planters are proposed to be incorporated into some of the upper-story outdoor spaces, mainly along the Arcadia Terrace elevation.

Potential Impact on Historic Resources

The subject building is listed on the City's Historic Resources Inventory as it "appears eligible for listing as a Landmark," although it was not listed on past HRIs. The property is potentially significant for conveying patterns of multi-family residential development that shaped the Ocean Park neighborhood of Santa Monica in the early decades of the 20th century. Constructed in 1914, it is one of relatively few extant multi-family residential buildings from this formative period of neighborhood growth.

While the proposed development would demolish the existing structure, the demolition review process has not been conducted.

DISCUSSION

The proposed contemporary design takes advantage of its location and has been designed to be oriented west towards the ocean. This has resulted in the main elevation along Appian Way having been given greater attention than the other three elevations. As the subject site has three facades that can be seen from the public right-of-way, the overall design concept needs to be conveyed throughout all of the elevations. While ample upper-story outdoor spaces have been incorporated into the building, there is a

lack of pedestrian oriented design. This is largely due to the first floor being positioned 6+' above the sidewalk along Appian Way.

In its review, the Board may wish to consider the following:

- Is the project appropriate to its context?
- How does the project relate to the public right-of-way and the entrance to the Arcadia Terrace walk-street?
- How can the project be better designed for pedestrian orientation, especially along Appian Way?
- Does the project have a clear architectural concept?
- Has the architectural concept and overall design been conveyed around the building?
- Is the overall configuration appropriate to the project site?
- Is the mass and scale appropriate?
- How can landscaping enhance the project?
- Do materials and details enhance the overall concept and represent a high-quality project?

Attachments

- A. Applicant's Submittal Material
- B. Historic Resource Inventory