



# Architectural Review Board Report

Architectural Review Board Meeting: January 19, 2021

Agenda Item: 7.2

To: Architectural Review Board  
From: Gina Szilak, Associate Planner  
Cc: Stephanie Reich, AIA, LEED AP, Design & Historic Preservation Planner  
Subject: 20ARB-0324 to review the façade remodel, colors, materials, landscaping plan, lighting plan, sign plans and a sign program for a new commercial multi-tenant building.  
Address: 2919 Wilshire Boulevard  
Applicant: URB 2919 Wilshire SM, LLC/ Co Greg Fick (Tait)

## Recommended Action

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board approve ARB application 20ARB-0324 based upon the findings and subject to the conditions contained within this report.

## Executive Summary

The proposal is for a new 14,999 SF commercial space with ground floor food serving tenant spaces, and a daycare use located in the rear on the first and second levels. The site had a previously approved project, approved by the Board on November 4, 2017, however, given the change of use and substantial design changes, the plans are again submitted for Board consideration.

## Background

The existing building (Jerry's Liquor) and site improvements were constructed in 1949.

19ENT-0455: Administrative Approval was approved on October 20, 2020 for the proposed retail/commercial project with a daycare center.

17ARB-0203: Building design, colors, materials, landscape irrigation and sign plans were approved by the Board on December 4, 2017 for the same developer but with a different design concept.

## Project / Site Information

The subject property is located at the northwest corner of Wilshire Boulevard and Stanford Street and consists of two parcels with the existing liquor store and a surface parking lot located to the west of the building. The existing building is 5,270 SF in size and approximately 17 feet tall. Combined with the surface parking there are 170 feet of frontage on Wilshire Boulevard and 130 feet of frontage on Stanford Street. Vehicular

access is provided from Stanford Street; pedestrian entrances are provided along both street frontages. Surrounding uses include an office building, retail, and personal services to the east and west, multi-family residential to the north, and multi-level office and retail buildings to the south.

The following table provides a brief summary of project data:

Zoning District / Design Guidelines:	Mixed Use Boulevard (MUB) District
Parcel Area (SF):	Existing Liquor Store and Parking lot; Total: ~22,120 SF (project site)
Parcel Dimensions:	170' x 130' approximately
Existing On-Site Improvements	One-story building: Jerry's Liquor store and surface parking lot (1949)
Mature Vegetation	None
Historic Resource	Existing building is not listed
CEQA	Exempt pursuant to Section 15061 (b)(3)
Adjacent Zoning & Use:	North MUB/R2 - Two-story multifamily residential South R2 - Two-story multi-family residential East MUB - Multi-story commercial/ retail West MUB- Four-story commercial



Project Rendering – Wilshire Boulevard elevation

Design Concept

The project is expressed as one-story and two-story glass façade layered with a wood screen screening circulation area along the western half of the Wilshire frontage, and a metal screen at the second floor, cantilevered outdoor space at the corner. A generous

recessed area separates these two building elements. The design is for a food court with an outdoor dining street presence in that central space and along the entire Wilshire frontage, with a day care function at the rear and second floor. The access stair and ramp take up a substantial portion of the frontage due in part to a three-foot grade differential from east to west along Wilshire Boulevard. These elements are incorporated into the outdoor dining area resulting in three separate yet connected dining areas.

The second-floor corner outdoor space is wrapped with an expanded metal screen. This screen serves as a safety element for the daycare's outdoor play area allowing light and air into the space. A stucco element frames the lower floor tenant spaces along the western portion of the Wilshire frontage formally defining the food court area and creating a counterpoint to the second-floor element. This element wraps the building at the corner as does the metal louver treatment at the ground floor making for a strong corner statement. The Stanford street elevation has a different, more solid character and is composed of the corner element, a tall element with wood siding with a stucco box in the background. Additional pedestrian access to the food court is via the street grade at the intersection of Wilshire Boulevard and Stanford Streets.

#### Site and Landscape Design

The ground floor is programmed to contain commercial space, inclusive of a food court, as well as a street access to the daycare center located in the rear of the structure. The ground floor is setback along the Wilshire Boulevard frontage providing an outdoor space for dining and emphasizing the solid void relationship with the mass above. The commercial tenant spaces are grouped into sections, allowing small food serving operations. A landscaped planting strip and a series of wood vertical and horizontal mullions provide some protective buffering from the street. Parking access, loading zones, and refuse areas are located off Stanford Street to the east.

The landscape design complements the building and site design in its use of blocks of raised planters and seating to define and activate the space. Planters include materials such as Blue Elf Aloe, Black Bamboo in the parkway along the driveway, and Scarlet Trumpet vine to climb the aluminum trellis supports. Sited in the daycare ground floor play yard (NW corner) are two large (36" box) Dragon Trees (*Dracaena Draco*). There are two 36" box Olive (*Olea Europaea*) trees at the Wilshire frontage. One Desert Museum (*Parkinsonia 'Desert Museum'*) tree is located in the outdoor space on the upper level, with three Desert Museum trees at the upper level. Currently Sheet A4 appears mislabeled and represents the second floor. Additionally, the trees are shown as Desert Museum, but labeled as Dragon Trees.

#### Mass and Scale

The project grouping of forms is read as two elements connected by the glass commercial space with a common front circulation/outdoor dining. The use of frame in a "C" form for the commercial frontage showcases the pedestrian space along the building frontage and acts in dialogue with the expanded metal screen. The wood screen element at the lower floor to create a pattern allowing light and air to enter the open deck seating space. Along the north and west (alley) elevations the building is more quiet with subtle articulation appropriate to site conditions.

Design, Details and Materials

The building is clad in dark and light smooth stucco accented with a wood siding and metal louvers. The metal vertical and horizontal louvers that act as mullions (dark brown) create interest at the ground level and act as a frame to define the outdoor seating area. The change in materials along the upper level helps define the space as it wraps the corner adding cohesion to the Stanford Street elevation. The cantilever at the southeast corner creates a volume that acts as a strong corner element. The upper level expanded metal screens designed in a light and dark painted metal grey shade provide contrast to functions of the structure that acts as a safety barrier to the upper level play yard. While this is a visually compelling material it may not be appropriate for a children’s play area as the material tends to be very rough. A condition is included to reconsider this material as a perforated or laser cut metal screen, or to ensure that the metal mesh is flattened so there are no rough edges.

The design is unique as it weaves in and out with the use of open railings creating a pedestrian-oriented design. The slope along Wilshire Boulevard requires use of a railing and a change in grade. The corner is designed at grade with the sidewalk, and the open railing with vines is a nice way to handle the grade change, providing an open feel. The outdoor dining activates the Wilshire frontage.

The metal railings included in the lighting plan are designed with internal LED lights that will provide visibility and help define the outdoor seating area. Additionally, ground recessed lights will illuminate the building facades.

Sign Plans/ Program

A sign program is being established with this application to provide criteria for the future commercial tenants in the building. The proposed sign program applies to identification for the nine tenant spaces associated with the property.

<b>SIGN AREA CALCULATIONS</b>	
Multi-tenant Building	<b>Yes</b>
Existing Sign Program	New building projects require a sign program.
Permitted Sign Area	255 SF (170' frontage x 1.5 corner lot = 255 SF)
Existing Sign Area (signs that will remain)	Existing meritorious pole sign "Jerry's Liquor" proposed to be removed.
Proposed Sign Area (this application)	24 square feet per tenant 9 x 24= 216 SF One monument sign 5 x 6= 35 x 1.5 (2 faces) = 45 SF 261 SF Total
Total Sign Area Upon Completion	9 wall sign areas + one monument signs= 10 total signs
Total Number of New Signs	See sign program dated 12/15/20
Compliance	Requires a 6 SF reduction of sign square footage to comply with the sign code; total allowable sign area of 255 SF

Sign “B” pg. 11 “Walls Sign Copy + Logo”

Proposed Sign Type: Logo and individual letters on raceway, building louvers or metal, or window mullions; LED-illuminated

Proposed Dimensions (Area):24 square feet including logo max height 18”

Proposed Colors: Brushed stainless steel (tenant spaces 9 x 24 SF @)

Sign “A” Pg. 9

Proposed Sign Type: one monument signs, aluminum cabinet wood faces non-illuminated channel letters

Proposed Dimensions (Area):6’ x 5 x 1.5 (2 sides copy) = 45 SF includes text

Proposed Colors: individual white cut out aluminum letters, ground illuminated

Sign Program

Specifications for the sign program include a logo and aluminum letters mounted to horizontal aluminum raceway but no trim cap attached to the letters. Colors and style of letters proposed would be at the individual tenant’s discretion. The nine allocated sign areas are proposed to have 24 square foot sign allowance which is consistent with our sign policy of allowing multi-tents to have a minimum of 25 square feet.

As proposed, the double-faced monument sign (located at the central building entrance upon the raised deck dining area) is perpendicular to the street located along the Wilshire fronting property wall. The daycare center has been allocated two wall signs, one on the Stanford Street frontage and another along the Wilshire Boulevard frontage. The Wilshire Boulevard placed sign is in an odd location. It is not adjacent to the entry door but placed near a food court space. Staff is recommending the applicant reconsider the signage for the daycare operation. A blade sign hung near the entry door or some type of reader board that would allow controlled access and identification of the business would be better suited to the building’s architecture. Staff has added a condition recommending these changes. Additionally, the program did not factor the second face of the monument sign and therefore the proposed signage is slightly over the Code allowance. Staff has added a condition for the proposed total signage not to exceed 255 SF.

Impact on Historic Resources

The subject property is not listed on the City’s Historic Resources Inventory.

**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.

**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. Any significant changes to the design subsequent to any ARB approval will require Board approval.

### **Summary**

The project design expresses main forms opposite one another with a recessed outdoor space between. The second story cantilever creates a strong corner element. The building's focal point is the outdoor experience expressed as outdoor patios with customer seating on the ground level. The proposed uses activate the street and is enhanced by the ground level's transparency into the space which invites the public domain into the adjoining private development.

### **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 the proposed new design is pedestrian-oriented with a strong design concept. Small tenant spaces proposed as restaurants with ample outdoor dining will create a lively frontage along Wilshire Boulevard.
- 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 manufactured wood, aluminum metal panels, trim/fascia, and clear glass store front systems that reinforce the architectural concept are 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 the proposed building enhancements incorporates and outdoor dining promotes an active street frontage which is appropriate and consistent with the variety of commercial establishment in the immediate neighborhood along Wilshire Boulevard.
- 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, reduce either the number or type of signage to ensure proposed sign program has a maximum permitted area of 255 SF.
- 2. Prior to plan check submittal The applicant shall work with staff to establish a sign for the proposed daycare use (tenant A) that is appropriately placed near the

entrance to the use and in scale with the Wilshire Boulevard frontage, and provide an improved location for the proposed monument sign.

3. Prior to plancheck submittal, an alternate material at the second-floor element shall be reviewed and approved by staff to replace the expanded metal mesh as the material may be inappropriate for a children's play area. If expanded metal mesh is used in this area, it should be the type that is flattened so there are no rough edges.
4. 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.
5. The applicant shall submit a color photograph of all installed signs demonstrating compliance with the Architectural Review Board approval to the staff liaison, prior to final sign-off for the sign permit.
6. This sign program includes the plans dated December 15, 2020 as modified by these conditions, a copy of which shall be maintained in the files of the City Planning Division. Future signs shall be consistent with such plans, except as otherwise specified in these conditions of approval. Exposed conduit, wiring or transformers are not permitted. Conductors, transformer and other equipment shall be concealed within the building and sign.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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

[https://smgov365.sharepoint.com/teams/pcdsp/CityPlanning/ARB/STFRPT/SR20/20ENT-0324 \(2919 Wilshire Blvd.\) BDCM/20ARB-0324 \(2919 Wilshire Blvd.\).docx](https://smgov365.sharepoint.com/teams/pcdsp/CityPlanning/ARB/STFRPT/SR20/20ENT-0324%20(2919%20Wilshire%20Blvd.)%20BDCM/20ARB-0324%20(2919%20Wilshire%20Blvd.).docx)