Joint Design Review Body Report

Agenda Item: 5-A

To: Joint Design Review Body
From: Steve Traeger, Principal Urban Designer
      Grace Page, ARB Liaison
      Scott Albright, Landmarks Commission Secretary
Subject: ARB 14ARB-173 to approve the design, colors materials and landscape plans for the construction of a new 270-room hotel that includes the retention and adaptive reuse of a City Landmark office building (Santa Monica Professional Building), a bridge connection between the Landmark building and the new hotel building, and 15,210 sf of ground-floor retail/restaurant space at 710 Wilshire Boulevard.

Address: 710 Wilshire Boulevard
Applicant: Howard Laks Architects for Maxser and Company

Recommended Action
It is recommended that the Joint Design Review Body approve ARB application 14ARB-173 based upon the findings and subject to the conditions contained within this report.

Executive Summary
The JDRB reviewed the project at its September 28, 2015 meeting where the Board voted 7-0 to approve Certificate of Appropriateness 14CA-012 and voted 5-2 to deny ARB application 14ARB-173 based on a number of issues including lack of a clear architectural concept, the perceived mass of the East elevation, and an unresolved bridge connection between the Landmark building and the new construction.

The applicant filed an appeal of the JDRB’s denial of 14ARB-173 on October 6, 2015. On December 8, 2015, the City Council voted 4-2 to deny the appeal without prejudice and remanded the application back to the JDRB. Council also directed the JDRB to render a final decision on the application within 6 months of the City Council’s action. On December 10, 2015, the applicant submitted a letter with threat of litigation. Council subsequently held a closed session on December 15, 2015 and voted 7-0 to approve a settlement agreement that included the following provisions:

- By January 13, 2016, the JDRB will conduct a public workshop on the project design. Staff will make good faith efforts to ensure that all seven members of the JDRB will be present and the City will make an audio/visual record of the proceedings.
- It is the Council’s intent and direction that, at the workshop, the JDRB will provide clear and concrete direction on the project by way of a collective consensus achieved through majority vote.
The JDRB will conduct a follow-up hearing within 30 days of receiving the revised architectural plans. Staff will make good faith efforts to ensure that all 7 members will be present and the City will make an audio/visual record of the proceedings.

The JDRB will render its final decision on remand no later than 6/8/16

If the JDRB’s final decision is appealed, Council will conduct a de novo hearing and render its final decision on appeal within 60 days of the appeal’s filing date. Staff will make a good faith effort to ensure that all 7 members of the Council are present for the appeal hearing.

Neither the JDRB nor City Council will utilize the design review process to compel a reduction in the size and scale of the project as approved by the DA, except to the extent specifically provided in the DA.

The JDRB held a workshop on January 11, 2016 to review the proposed project design and provided the following direction to the applicant:

- **Bridge Connection**
  - Bridge should slip past the new construction similar to approach taken in connection with Landmark building
  - Uniform depth of bridge is preferred
  - Lighting should be hidden on underside of bridge
  - Show views of bridge visually vs. technically to help in understanding nature of the connection

- **Architectural Concept: East Elevation, Curves, Color**
  - Bring solar orientation into the strategy for whole building composition with consideration for materiality and transparency (potentially curtain wall) to break up the perceived mass of the new construction, including the East Elevation
  - Consider softening curves in context of whole building composition for the new construction with rhythm and forms that relate unto itself instead of only a response to the Landmark building
  - Color to be resolved in relation to new rationale for total building composition

- **Building Entrance Canopy**
  - Revisit design of the entrance canopy in the context of new rationale for total building composition

- **Landscaping**
  - Activate paseo and courtyard with consideration for how the water feature and landscaping are viewed from within the project and from the sidewalk
  - Temper the lighting design and graphic elements of the terrazzo paving

**Background**
The JDRB approved Certificate of Appropriateness 14CA-012 and denied ARB Application 14ARB-173 on September 28, 2015. The JDRB subsequently held a workshop on January 11, 2016 and voted unanimously to give the applicant specific direction in terms of the bridge connection between the Landmark and new construction, the architectural concept, the building entrance, and landscaping.

**Analysis of Applicant’s Response**
The applicant has included an annotated response to the JDRB’s comments (Attachment A). The design has evolved to introduce significantly more transparency to the façade distinguishing the new construction as a discrete building composition while softening the perceived mass of the new construction in relation to the Landmark. The following analysis presents the applicant’s response to the direction provided by the JDRB.

**Bridge Connection**

**JDRB Direction**
- Bridge should slip past the new construction similar to approach taken in connection with Landmark building
- Uniform depth of bridge is preferred
- Lighting should be hidden on underside of bridge
- Show views of bridge visually vs. technically to help in understanding nature of the connection

**Applicant’s Response**
The bridge connection has been re-aligned with the new building so that the bridge connection with the new construction is resolved cleanly and provides symmetry with the way the connection occurs at the Landmark building. Realignment of fenestration on the new construction has also facilitated the new bridge connection.

The depth of the C-channel has been maintained at 18” to provide a uniform depth to the bridge. The material for the underside of the bridge has been changed from stucco to Fiber-Reinforced Polymer (FRP), which is the same material that is proposed for the entrance canopy. In the prior submittal, the lighting proposed for the underside of the bridge was visible downlights. Cove lighting is now proposed to be concealed behind the perimeter C-channels, with the exception of downlights at the building entrances for safety. The form of the FRP is concave in order to enhance the indirect illumination from the concealed lighting. The project plans and applicant’s annotated response provide renderings and cross-sectional views to provide a clear understanding of the proposed design.

**Architectural Concept: East Elevation, Curves, Color**
**JDRB Direction**

- Bring solar orientation into the strategy for whole building composition with consideration for materiality and transparency (potentially curtain wall) to break up the perceived mass of the new construction, including the East Elevation
- Consider softening curves in context of whole building composition for the new construction with rhythm and forms that relate unto itself instead of only a response to the Landmark building
- Color to be resolved in relation to new rationale for total building composition

**Applicant's Response**

The expansive use of glass as the predominant façade material has aided in reducing the perceived mass of the building. Solar orientation and shading has been considered in concert with the whole building composition. Increasing the surface area of glass on the façade allows for the clear expression of the structural slab emphasizing the softer curves in the building design. Vertical fins divide the glass façade providing a modern reference to the proportions of the Landmark building and additional solar control. On the East Elevation, the materials alternate between predominantly glass and GFRC to provide differentiation on the façade and further breaks in the building mass.

**Prior East Elevation**

**Revised East Elevation**

The curves have been softened throughout the floor plans in response to the use of glazing as a predominant façade material. The angle of the curves is less acute so as not to compete with the distinctive geometry of the Landmark building. The gradual
curves are included in the overall building composition of using glazing on the curved portions of the new construction contrasted with the use of GFRC on the straight portions.

The color palette has been revised in response to the increased transparency of the building elevations. A lighter shade of grey has been proposed to complement the glass and natural concrete. A blue shade continues to be proposed as an accent color for the vertical transition points between the curved forms while a lighter blue shade is proposed for the entrance canopy.

Building Entrance Canopy

JDRB Direction
- Revisit design of the entrance canopy in the context of new rationale for total building composition

Applicant’s Response
The entrance canopy has been updated to respond to the revised overall building composition. The mass and depth of the entrance canopy has been reduced to reflect the extensive use of glazing to lighten the building façades. The canopy has also been extended to relate to the more gradual curves that form the transition corners of the new construction.

Landscaping

JDRB Direction
- Activate paseo and courtyard with consideration for how the water feature and landscaping are viewed from within the project and from the sidewalk
- Temper the lighting design and graphic elements of the terrazzo paving
Applicant’s Response
The entrance to the paseo is lined with decorative planters and vertical plantings. The courtyard has been expanded in size due to a small curved depression into the building on the south side. The concave depression is a continuation of the sweeping storefront glazing system that begins on 7th Street and invites pedestrians into the courtyard. A water feature is proposed on the north side of the courtyard serving as a gathering place and focal point for the public space. Built-in seating and planter areas cascade from the water feature creating an amphitheater-like environment that could accommodate performances and other entertainment activities in the courtyard.

The terrazzo paving has been revised to include only curves that relate to the building composition. Site lighting has also been simplified to focus on landscaping elements and provide illumination of accent elements.

Building Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESIGN ELEMENTS</th>
<th>PROPOSED EXTERIOR MATERIAL, FINISH AND COLOR</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Construction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Façade</td>
<td>Exterior Wall: Clark Pacific 12118-10 GFRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exterior Wall (background): Smooth Steel Trowel Stucco, BM Custom “710 Blue” @ 50%; Dunn Edwards DE6375 @ 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Structural Slab: Exposed Cast-In-Place Concrete</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control Joint: Sealant, To Match GFRC/Stucco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>Storefront: Aluminum, Clear Anodized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guest Rooms: Aluminum, Clear Anodized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors</td>
<td>Aluminum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roof</td>
<td>Roof Fin: Aluminum Cladding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Screening</td>
<td>Aluminum Louvers, Metallic Paint (Metallic Silver Colorweld 300XL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refuse Screening</td>
<td>Aluminum Louvers, Metallic Paint (Metallic Silver Colorweld 300XL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>See lighting plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canopy/Awning/Trellis</td>
<td>Fiber-Reinforced Polymer, BM Custom “710 Blue”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railings</td>
<td>Glass, Tempered (Clear)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Pedestrian Bridge: Steel, Painted (C2-274A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exterior Floor: Terrazo (Blue, White, Beige, Grey); Concrete, Presto (Mesa Beige)</td>
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ARB 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 contemporary design of the new hotel building is complementary to the distinctive features of the Landmark building. The design of the new hotel building provides a sensitive backdrop to the Landmark building by providing a significant building setback on Wilshire Boulevard, building insets on 7th Street, extensive use of glazing on the building facades and breaks in the building mass on the alley elevation that all reduce the perceived mass of the new hotel building. Further, the new hotel building provides a contemporary reference to the layers and sculptural quality of the Landmark building but is clearly differentiated in materials, colours, and architectural elements. Landscaping at the podium and upper levels softens the elevations of each building and helps to
transition around each elevation and connects the alley to the podium courtyard. The introduction of water features and seating in the retail paseo and hotel entrance are in keeping with the coastal color palette and landscape theme. The continuous, curved 18-foot high storefront glazing system on 7th Street and the large openings into the retail paseo activates the pedestrian environment with outdoor dining areas that strengthen the indoor-outdoor relationship between each building and the adjacent public space.

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 as detailed in the application submittal and as presented to the Joint Design Review Body will be used.

C. The proposed design of the building or structure is compatible with developments on land in the general area. The proposed project has been designed with significant building setbacks to ensure that the mass and scale of the project is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood context. The project has reduced massing from Wilshire Boulevard and from 7th Street placing more of the mass towards the southern end of the project site, away from the residential neighborhood to the north. The new hotel building provides a sensitive context for the Landmark building but is also compatible with the surrounding neighborhood context, which is primarily one- to three-story buildings punctuated by a few high-rise buildings, including the Landmark building. In this sense, the proposed project continues an established context of generally low-scale development mixed with higher buildings on selected sites.

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 Joint Design Review Body, and as conditioned, the plans will fully comply with all applicable regulations prior to the issuance of a building permit.
CONDITIONS:

1. These approvals are for the plans reviewed on March 30, 2016, which are on file in the City Planning Division, except as amended by JDRB action.

2. These approvals shall expire when the administrative or discretionary entitlements, not including any Subdivision Map approvals, previously granted for the project have lapsed.

3. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall demonstrate that the plans are consistent with the plans approved pursuant to Development Agreement 07-006. Significant changes to the project’s design shall require review and approval of the Joint Design Review Body. Minor changes may be approved administratively pursuant to all applicable Architectural Review Board guidelines.

4. 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 affect less than 150 square feet of area may be reviewed and approved by the Staff Liaison to the Board.

The Joint Design Review Body’s approval, conditions of approval, or denial of this application may be appealed to the City Council if the appeal is filed with the City Clerk within ten consecutive days following the date of the Joint Design Review Body’s determination in the manner provided in SMMC Section 9.36.180.

Prepared by: Jing Yeo, Planning Manager
Steve Traeger, Principal Urban Designer
Grace Page, ARB Liaison
Scott Albright, Landmarks Commission Secretary

Attachments
A. Applicant’s Annotated Response to JDRB direction from January 11, 2016
B. Applicant’s Submittal Material
C. Public Notice