



DESIGN REVIEW BOARD RECORD OF DECISION

Meeting Date	<u>May 23, 2019</u>	DRB Case No.	<u>PDR1902585</u>
		Address	<u>620 West Elk Avenue</u>
		Applicant	<u>Brett Henry</u>

Project Summary:

The applicant is proposing to construct a new 3-story, 214,745 square-foot personal storage facility with 40 parking spaces on an 81,875 square-foot project site located in the IMU Zone. The project site consists of four contiguous parcels with frontage on West Elk Avenue to the north and Vine Street to the south. All existing industrial buildings on the project site will be demolished.

Design Review:

Board Member	Motion	Second	Yes	No	Absent	Abstain
Arzoumanian					X	
Benlian			X			
Boyajyan		X	X			
Simonian	X		X			
Totals			3	0	1	
DRB Decision		Approve with Conditions and a Consideration				

Conditions:

1. Modify the proposed "architectural towers" to reduce the overall height, extend the parapets into the roof plane and terminate in a logical manner, and continue the metal paneling to the base of the towers, omitting the stone veneer.
2. Provide a three foot landscape strip along the street-facing façades that incorporates plant species with varying heights to soften the building and provide a cohesive transition from the industrial uses to the nearby residential uses.
3. Redesign the south façade to include two wall recesses of approximately three feet deep by five feet wide that integrate materials in a vertical direction and add a visual complexity to the façade. Additionally, the upper level design feature shown on the north and west elevations (glazing that reveals the red roll-up doors) should be incorporated into the design to improve the building articulation and break up the overall mass along Vine Street.

4. Revise the drawings to include spandrel glass in the central bay windows along the stair towers on the north elevation to provide symmetry.
5. Set back the fencing and gate locations from both streets, approximately two feet.
6. Submit an exterior lighting proposal to include exterior lighting for the new building with fixtures that are consistent with the contemporary style of the development.
7. Revise drawings to include details that show how the materials will wrap corners, how they will meet, and terminate appropriately.
8. Incorporate decorative paving material at the driveway entrances.
9. Revise drawings to identify the mechanical equipment and required screening, and the location of the trash collection areas.
10. Consult with the City Arborist regarding the existing street trees along West Elk Avenue and Vine Street to implement a street tree planting plan to include a combination of tree removal, replacement, and preservation.

Consideration:

1. Modify the flared cornices of the “architectural towers” to match the rest of the building or to reduce their prominence.

Analysis:

Site Planning:

The proposed site planning is appropriate, as modified by any proposed conditions, to the site and its surroundings for the following reasons:

- The site planning for the project is comparable to other large warehousing and industrial developments in the City with the building footprint covering the majority of the project site. While the IMU zone does not have required street-front setbacks, lot coverage, or landscaping standards, this block transitions from industrial uses to residential uses. To provide an appropriate transition from these uses, a condition of approval will require a 3-foot landscape strip along the street-facing façades with plant species of varying heights incorporated to help soften the building.
- Located in the middle of the project site, the parking area has been integrated in the building design. The project will provide 40 parking spaces, including one handicapped parking space, with access taken from driveways located along each street frontage (West Elk Avenue to the north, and Vine Street to the south). Landscape planters will be located at the driveway entrances to buffer the parking area from the street.
- As conditioned, the wrought iron security fencing and gates proposed at the two driveway entrances shall be setback one to two feet to help break up the façade along both street frontages, providing a more appropriate landscape buffer at the street level.
- The development also includes landscaped areas adjacent to the staircase egress landings along both street frontages. Additionally, along the southeasterly portion of the project site there is an approximately 1,300 square-foot landscaped area. This area will feature new trees that will provide a buffer with the adjacent one-story industrial building. As noted above, a condition of approval will require a 3 foot planting strip along the street-facing façades. All new landscaping materials will be drought tolerant.
- There are varying species of street trees located in the parkway, including three Coast Live Oak street trees. The City’s Urban Forestry Division has reviewed the project proposal and will require the applicant to implement a street tree planting plan under the guidance of the staff arborist which will include a combination of tree removal, replacement, and preservation of existing street trees adjacent to the site. A condition of approval will require the applicant to consult with the City Arborist regarding the existing street trees along both frontages.

- The trash collection area and mechanical equipment and screening are not identified on the drawings. A condition of approval will require the drawings to be revised to include these items for staff review and approval.

Mass and Scale:

The proposed massing and scale are appropriate, as modified by any proposed conditions, to the site and its surroundings for the following reasons:

- The mass and scale of the project is typical of a large storage facility, but is a significant increase over the existing conditions. Conditions of approval have been placed on the project to help reduce the mass and scale.
- The immediate area surrounding the project site is zoned IMU, with IMU-R directly adjacent to the east, and contains a mix of commercial and industrial uses with buildings ranging in height from one to two stories. Directly to the north of the project site along Elk Avenue is the Interstate 5 Freeway and a freeway off-ramp. Single-family and multi-family residential structures ranging in height from one to five stories are located within 500 feet of the project site to the east on the same block.
- The maximum height permitted in the IMU zone is 50 feet. The proposed building is three stories with an overall height of 40'-0" measured to the top of the parapets and 48'-0" measured to the top of the "architectural towers" located along both street frontages, primarily at the corners of the building. The proposed eight foot difference in height from the top of the parapets to the top of the proposed "architectural towers" seems excessive. Additionally, the proposed signage shown on these towers does not comply with the sign code, and will not be permitted. Therefore, a condition of approval will require that the height of the towers be reduced by a few feet to help reduce the overall massing and improve the proportions of the design.
- The proposed use is a personal storage facility in an industrial area of the City, adjacent to a major arterial (San Fernando Road) and across the street from a freeway offramp. Therefore, the scale and proportion of the project are not completely inappropriate. The façades are largely in the same vertical plane, with recessed volumes located along the street-facing frontages that include egress landings and landscaped areas adjacent to the stairwells. Along the south façade (Vine Street), the corner articulation is appropriate. However, a condition of approval will require this south elevation to be modified to include two recesses (one on either side of the parking entry and centrally located), approximately three feet deep and five feet wide to break down the scale and overall length of the building, provide better articulation at this façade and avoid overbearing, elongated building at the street.
- The "blockiness" of the massing, which is typical of large storage buildings, is mitigated by several design features. Aside from certain vertical elements, primarily at the corners of the building, and the 68 foot wide, ground floor parking lot entrances that divide the ground floor at the center of the project, the building is one large mass. At the base of the new building, alternating bands of dark and lighter gray concrete block help ground the building while providing a strong horizontality. At the upper floors, ribbed metal panels with accent bands marking the floor levels relieve the flatness of the wall. The use of glass also breaks up the massing in an effective way. The vertical elements ("architectural towers") feature glazed openings at the second and third floors facing the street that reveal red roll-up doors and serve as the building calling card. This design feature is repeated at the third floor of the primary façade facing West Elk Avenue, and along the west elevation, which will be visible from San Fernando Road. A condition of approval will require that this design feature be incorporated into the design of the south façade along Vine Street. In general, these windows break through the wall planes and help reduce the sense of mass at these façades.

Design and Detailing:

The proposed design and detailing are appropriate, as modified by any proposed conditions, to the site and its surroundings for the following reasons:

- Overall, the finish materials incorporated within the design reinforce the architectural concept of the new three-story industrial building.
- The project does not include a primary pedestrian entry to the building, and all circulation is confined to the interior of the site, including building entries accessed from the parking lot. Based on the proposed use of the site as a personal storage facility, this is not inappropriate.
- The drawings do not identify exterior lighting on the building façades. As conditioned, the applicant will be required to submit a lighting proposal to include exterior lighting for the new building with fixtures that are consistent with the style.
- The elevation drawings depict numerous wall signs on each of the building façades. All proposed building signage shall be required to comply with the provisions of GMC 30.33, and separate permits will be required.
- The exterior finish materials consist of alternating bands of dark and lighter gray split face concrete blocks at the base of the building. The upper floors feature ribbed metal panels in a light gray color with blue accent bands marking the second and third floor levels. At the third floor along the north and west elevations, perforated metal panels are proposed adjacent to glazed openings that reveal red roll-up doors that signify the use as a personal storage facility.
- The proposed vertical elements, identified as “architectural towers” on the drawings, are located primarily at the corners of the building and feature a gray stone veneer at the base, and ribbed metal panels in a dark gray color with red accent bands marking the floor levels. The street-facing façades of these “architectural towers” feature glazed openings at the second and third floors that reveal red roll-up doors. A condition of approval will require that the stone veneer be omitted from the design and that the metal panels of the towers continue to the base of the building.

DRB Staff Member Vista Ezzati, Planner

Notes:

Contact the case planner for an appointment for a DRB stamp. DRB stamps will not be stamped over the counter without an appointment with the case planner.

The Design Review Board approves the design of project only. Approval of a project by the Design Review Board does not constitute an approval of compliance with the Zoning Code and/or Building Code requirements.

If an appeal is not filed within the 15-day appeal period of the Design Review Board decision, plans may be approved for Building Division plan check. Prior to Building Division plan check submittal, Design Review Board approved plans must be stamped approved by the Design Review staff.

Any changes to the approved plans may constitute returning to the Design Review Board for approval. Prior to Building Division plan check submittal, all changes in substantial conformance with approved plans by the Design Review Board must be on file with the Planning Division.