

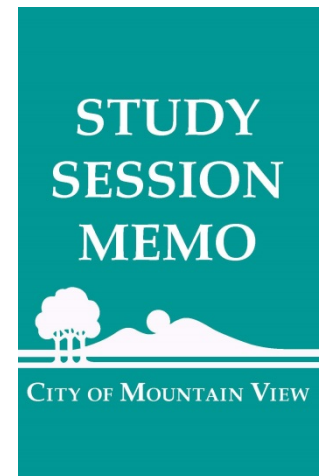
DATE: October 24, 2017

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Mariya Hodge, Senior Planner
Randal Tsuda, Community Development
Director

VIA: Daniel H. Rich, City Manager

TITLE: 2580 and 2590 California Street and 201 San Antonio Circle – Input on Architectural Design of the Proposed Development



PURPOSE

The purpose of this Study Session is to discuss the proposed architectural design for Greystar's mixed-use development project located at the corner of California Street and San Antonio Road, particularly in the context of concerns expressed by the City Council about the design of several recent projects with contemporary architecture.

BACKGROUND

At a Study Session on December 13, 2016, the City Council considered an informal application by Greystar for a new Master Plan and mixed-use redevelopment project in the San Antonio Precise Plan ("SAPP") area.

The 8.63-acre project site is identified in the SAPP as the North of California Street Master Plan area. The City Council provided feedback on key issues, including the mix of land uses, ground-floor active spaces, building heights, park land dedication, publicly accessible open space, public benefits, and displacement of existing commercial tenants. The informal application prioritized input on site planning and did not include architectural plans or renderings for review by Council.



Figure 1 – Project Location

In February 2017, Greystar submitted a formal application for the proposed mixed-use development, based on Council input from the December 2016 Study Session. Proposed plans currently identify 641 residential units and approximately 21,000 square feet of commercial space, including 2,455 square feet of ground-floor area dedicated to nonprofit offices. The formal application includes detailed architectural plans, which have not yet been reviewed by the Council.

Since February, staff has worked with the applicant through several rounds of plan review to refine the project design. The Development Review Committee (DRC) also reviewed the project on May 31, 2017 and provided design feedback to staff and the developer. The DRC has requested the project be returned to them after revision, including any input from Council, for further review and eventual recommendation.

In the interim, the City Council has reviewed several large projects with contemporary architecture. Through those project hearings, Councilmembers have expressed concerns about contemporary architectural character. In particular, Councilmembers noted some buildings felt blocky and monolithic, and used too many similar elements from other projects, which may reduce the uniqueness of the contemporary designs. Staff is seeking the City Council's input on this project design because Council did not previously review architectural concepts for the project and because Council has raised general concerns with recently approved residential projects. A broader Council discussion on architectural design in new development will be scheduled for early 2018.

DISCUSSION

The following sections briefly describe the project design, City design direction, and the developer's current efforts to address these comments. Council input is requested on project architecture to ensure the project remains consistent with Council's design expectations as it proceeds through the rest of the development review process.

Site Design

Greystar's proposed project consists of four new buildings ranging in height from three to five stories. The project introduces a new north-south street ("A Street"), a new east-west street ("B Street"), and a new pedestrian and bicycle connection from the center of the site north to San Antonio Circle. At the northeast corner of A and B Streets is a new 1-acre publicly accessible open space, which will be privately maintained by the developer. A wide pedestrian promenade on the east side of A Street leads from California Street to the central open space.



Figure 2 – Site Plan (July 26, 2017 Plans)

The site layout was previously reviewed by the City Council at the December 2016 Study Session, and the applicant has substantially addressed Council’s feedback. With site design topics largely addressed, recent design direction has focused on building design and interfaces with public frontages and open spaces.

Architectural Design

The proposed buildings use contemporary architectural styles, and Greystar seeks to create a different identity for each of the project’s buildings using varying architectural details, building amenities, unit types, and layout. Greystar provided a full plan resubmittal on July 26, 2017; an architectural excerpt from this submittal is attached (see Attachment 1). Based on these plans, a summary of each building’s theme and key

architectural features, as well as key staff and DRC feedback on the design, are provided below.

Staff and DRC feedback is based on the SAPP design guidelines, which encourage contemporary, innovative design styles; pedestrian-oriented features; strongly defined building bases and corners; massing breaks; high-quality materials and detailing; and neighborhood transitions (see Attachment 2 for a more detailed summary of applicable SAPP design guidelines). Overall, staff and the DRC supported the contemporary design strategy, but identified locations where more traditional building forms, materials, and detailing are needed to facilitate a smoother transition with adjacent developments.

The development review process for this project is ongoing, and the attached plans are still works in progress. Some of the following design comments may not be fully addressed in the attached plan materials. The intent of this Study Session is to check in with Council on the project architecture, staff's design direction to the applicant, and specific areas where additional work may still be needed to meet City expectations for high-quality design.

Building 1



Figure 3 – Building 1 Viewed from the Corner of San Antonio Road and California Street

Building 1 is envisioned as a “warehouse lofts”-themed building, having a mixed-use urban character. The building is generally characterized by rectangular forms and flat roofs. Tower elements use inverted gable or “butterfly” roof forms at the northeast, southeast, and southwest building corners. Along California Street, ground-floor retail storefronts project forward to the sidewalk; the building’s main four- to five-story massing is stepped back 7’ to 10’ from the ground-floor commercial space, with additional step-backs of about 4’ to 7’ at the fifth-floor level. Along other frontages, smaller fourth-story step-backs are also provided. Wall materials consist of stucco, cementitious siding, and brick veneer. Corten steel and composite wood siding are used as accent materials (see Attachment 1, Sheets A3.1.1 to A3.1.9).



Figure 4 – Building 1 Viewed from the Corner of California Street and A Street

Staff and DRC Comments on Building 1:

- Study ways to add a more unique and lively character for a highly visible building. Substantial fifth-story massing, regular patterns of stacked rectangular forms, and limited roofline variation result in a heavy, static appearance.
- The color palette is dark and dominated by cool gray tones. Look at ways to soften, lighten, and warm the appearance of this building.
- Consider further refinement of the corner elements. Enhancements may include: carrying the zig-zag roof movement into the wall plane; changing the scale or design of the corner mass to more effectively integrate the ground floor; creating a

better linkage between corner features and adjacent facade areas; or replacing the proposed corner elements with other special features.

Greystar recently submitted several revised conceptual renderings (see Attachment 3), which begin to show the direction the developer is taking in responding to staff comments. A narrative summarizing the architectural changes was also provided (see Attachment 4). The revised renderings provide a limited number of views for three of the project's buildings; a full architectural resubmittal has not been provided at this time. As a result, staff has not had the opportunity to make a complete review of revised architecture. A summary of the changes depicted in the renderings and initial staff feedback are provided below.

For Building 1, the revised renderings show additional fifth-floor step-backs along San Antonio Road and California Street, and greater use of corten steel on projecting bays; staff supports the improved massing and warmer colors achieved through these changes. The renderings also include revisions to the corner feature at California Street and A Street, and provide two alternate, lighter brick options representing potential directions for the color palette. Staff and the DRC will work with the applicant to review color options and samples as the development review process progresses; a more detailed discussion of material and color for the project as a whole is also provided later in this report. Overall, the proposed revisions for Building 1 are a step in the right direction, but do not represent a substantial change in character or massing. Staff believes additional work on the design concept is needed to achieve the above objectives.

Question 1: Does Council concur with staff's design direction for Building 1?

Question 2: Does Council support staff's assessment that the revised renderings for Building 1 are a step in the right direction, but additional work is needed on building character, corners, rooflines, and colors/materials to achieve the identified design direction?

Building 2



Figure 5 – Building 2 Viewed from A Street

Building 2 is designed with a focus on recreation, including a range of active residential amenities, as well as ground-floor commercial uses. The California Street and B Street elevations echo but do not exactly duplicate the Building 1 design, with rectangular forms, flat roofs, and upper-floor step-backs. The A Street elevation introduces additional design accents, including larger frames of metal panels along parapets and around building segments, echoing the butterfly roof forms of Building 1's towers; undulating wall planes; and projecting corner balconies. Building heights vary as Building 2 steps down from five stories near A Street to three stories at Pacchetti Way, and a lighter color palette is used. Along Pacchetti Way, the building is simplified and gabled roofs are introduced to respond to the more traditional design of the rowhouses across the street. Wall materials consist of stucco, cementitious siding, and composite wood siding. Ceramic tile is used along the building base, with corten steel as an additional accent (see Attachment 1, Sheets A3.2.1 to A3.2.12).



Figure 6— Building 2 Viewed from Pacchetti Way

Staff and DRC Comments on Building 2:

- The east elevation (facing Pacchetti Way) is a sensitive interface. Although the building height step-downs provide appropriate scale, further design refinement is needed to better relate Building 2 to the more traditional development across the street. Revised materials and lighter colors are recommended to create a softer and warmer residential character. It is also recommended that a closer look be taken at the roof forms and ground-floor entries.
- The Pacchetti Way and California Street corner feature appears awkward and does not clearly relate to the rest of the south or east elevations. Consider changes to integrate and provide a more effective transition between the two elevations.
- On the eastern half of the north elevation, massing and the use of colors and materials are not well integrated and do not coordinate well with the rest of the building.

The revised renderings for Building 2 have increased the use of warm wood materials throughout the building; increased the consistency of massing, colors, and materials on the north elevation; adjusted the corner design at Pacchetti Way and California Street; and revised the Pacchetti Way massing, porches, and colors and materials to better respond to the adjacent rowhouses. These changes will require typical review and refinement through the development review process, but show substantial progress in addressing prior staff and DRC feedback.

Question 3: Does Council concur with staff's design direction for Building 2, and assessment of the revised renderings?

Building 3



Figure 7 – Building 3 Viewed from the Intersection of A Street and B Street

Building 3's central theme is fitness. This building uses similar architectural elements and details as Buildings 1 and 2, but with different proportions and applications. Along San Antonio Road and B Street, smaller metal frames recall the more prominent frame element on Building 2's west elevation while establishing a fourth-floor massing break. The design of the east elevation facing the open space has a strong relationship to Building 2's undulating west elevation, with a larger metal frame at the southeast corner, which also harkens back to Building 1's corner detailing. An exterior stair element and open atrium with glass guardrails highlight the building entry facing the central open space. Wall materials are primarily stucco and composite wood siding. Accents include metal panels, corten steel, and a ceramic tile base (see Attachment 1, Sheets A3.3.1 to A3.3.11).



Figure 8 – Building 3 Viewed from San Antonio Road Near B Street

Staff and DRC Comments on Building 3:

- Fifth-story massing is substantial. The south and west elevations exhibit significant solidity, creating a more monolithic appearance above the first floor. Consider opportunities to increase wall movement through additional step-backs, better expression of existing breaks in the massing (e.g., at balconies), and other design details.
- Consider the pedestrian experience along the north elevation. The transition of the base material to a detached patio wall may be too monolithic next to the public path.

The Building 3 revised renderings illustrate increased articulation and fifth-floor (and partial fourth-floor) step-backs, particularly along B Street, so more of the taller building area will recede from view. Staff supports the changes to upper-story massing, but will need to continue to work with the applicant on the expression of existing massing breaks and the pedestrian experience along the north elevation, as well as other design objectives for the project as a whole which are discussed in further detail below.

Question 4: Does Council concur with staff's design direction for Building 3, and assessment of the revised renderings?

Building 4



Figure 9 – Building 4 Viewed from B Street near Pachetti Way

Building 4 is envisioned as a less urban, family-oriented building with larger units and a shared private outdoor space. This building is the smallest of the four project buildings and employs a simpler design scheme. Massing is four stories facing the open space and steps down to three stories in the neighborhood transition area closest to the rowhouses in The Crossings. The main building mass is broken into smaller segments by recesses between primary wall areas. Projecting bays provide some additional visual interest, along with fourth-floor sunshades and ground-floor patio trellises; however, vertical breaks in massing are not strongly emphasized. Wall materials are generally stucco, with some cementitious and composite wood siding. Accent materials are metal and wood (see Attachment 1, Sheets A3.4.1 to A3.4.7).

Staff and DRC Comments on Building 4:

- The building's modern design, stucco materials, and gray color palette may be too stark when contrasted with the traditional style of adjacent rowhouses. Similar to Building 3, more traditional residential elements, lighter colors, and warmer materials could improve the transition to the adjacent developments.
- The building lacks a strong base; consider the addition of a base material and/or revised entry porch design, particularly along B Street.

- Bay elements appear awkward in renderings. Evaluate proportions and design to ensure bays read as building masses rather than architectural frames.

No revised renderings were provided for Building 4, but staff has met with the applicant about these comments and will continue to work with them to refine the plans accordingly.

Question 5: Does Council concur with staff's design direction for Building 4?

Comments Applicable to Multiple Buildings

- Close attention is needed to ground-floor design to provide varied residential character and pedestrian-oriented detailing throughout the project. Most entries are hidden beneath projecting upper floors, and the design should better highlight ground-floor entries. Materials and texture may also improve the ground-floor expression and provide opportunity for varied designs between the buildings. Main building entries should be distinguished from unit entries.
- Consider a wider range of building materials. Stucco and cementitious siding are heavily used. Corten and wood could be used more extensively, or in different proportions. Additional or alternate materials could highlight the building base and emphasize wall movements; and additional material textures such as metal with punch patterns or patina, and different wood material textures, could provide more variation in similar features used throughout the project.
- Color variation is encouraged to distinguish upper floors and provide differentiation between buildings. The color palette is limited, with substantial use of grays. Consider a wider range of colors, including warmer tones.

Porch/entry designs, colors, and materials are typical topics for staff and DRC review of residential projects, particularly in latter stages of the review process when project massing and larger-scale design changes have been resolved. Some of the revised renderings begin to address these objectives. If Council supports staff direction, staff and the DRC would continue to work with the applicant to refine these elements through the remainder of the development review process.

Question 6: Does Council concur with staff's design direction relating to ground-floor design, materials, and colors for all project buildings?

Question 7: Does Council have any additional architectural direction for the developer and staff to incorporate into the remainder of the development review process?

CONCLUSION

Staff and the DRC have provided detailed comments on the project architecture in order to address the objectives set forth in the SAPP's design guidelines and ensure a high-quality design. Revised renderings provided by the developer demonstrate progress toward addressing many of these comments for Buildings 1 through 3, although additional design work is needed.

Greystar's proposed project is at a midpoint in the development review process; staff and the DRC will continue to work with the applicant to refine the project architecture and address key design objectives. As a result, the attached plans are not presented as final designs for Council approval. Instead, the in-progress drawings and staff and DRC comments discussed above will allow the Council to provide guidance for the remainder of the development review process.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff requests the City Council provide input on the project's architectural design, including the key discussion questions below:

Question 1: Does Council concur with staff's design direction for Building 1?

Question 2: Does Council support staff's assessment that the revised renderings for Building 1 are a step in the right direction, but additional work is needed on building character, corners, rooflines, and colors/materials to achieve the identified design direction?

Question 3: Does Council concur with staff's design direction for Building 2, and assessment of the revised renderings?

Question 4: Does Council concur with staff's design direction for Building 3, and assessment of the revised renderings?

Question 5: Does Council concur with staff's design direction for Building 4?

Question 6: Does Council concur with staff's design direction relating to ground-floor design, materials, and colors for all project buildings?

Question 7: Does Council have any additional architectural direction for the developer and staff to incorporate into the remainder of the development review process?

NEXT STEPS

After receiving feedback from the City Council, the applicant will further refine the project's architectural design. Revised drawings will be presented to staff and the DRC for review. After completing their review, the DRC will make a recommendation to the City Council on the project's site and architectural design. If the process continues to move forward at the current pace, environmental review is expected to be completed in early 2018, and Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) and City Council hearings could be scheduled in spring 2018.

PUBLIC NOTICING

The Council's agenda is advertised on Channel 26, and the agenda and this report appear on the City's website at www.mountainview.gov. Property owners and tenants within a 300' radius of the site, as well as owners and tenants throughout the entire nearby Crossings development, the Greater San Antonio Community Association, the Monta Loma Neighborhood Association, and other interested stakeholders were notified of this meeting.

MH-RT/MH/7/CAM
802-10-24-17SS-E

- Attachments:
1. Architectural Excerpt from Plans Submitted July 26, 2017
 2. Summary of San Antonio Precise Plan Design Guidelines
 3. Revised Conceptual Renderings Submitted October 4, 2017
 4. Architect's Summary of Revisions