



CITY OF GLENDALE, CA

DESIGN REVIEW STAFF REPORT – COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL / MIXED USE

January 9, 2025 <i>Hearing Date</i>	1308 South Brand Boulevard <i>Address</i>
Design Review Board (DRB) <i>Review Type</i>	5640-016-036 <i>APN</i>
PDR 000889-2023 <i>Case Number</i>	Bill James Architects <i>Applicant</i>
Roger Kiesel <i>Case Planner</i>	South Brand Group Inc. <i>Owner</i>

Project Summary

The applicant is requesting approval of a new Subaru of Glendale automobile dealership building. The five level structure will be approximately 111,000 square feet in area. The first level (31,538 SF) will include the showroom, sales/consultation offices, service write-up area, parts storage, back-of-house uses and the service drives. The second level (14,894 SF) will include parts storage, training rooms and offices. The third level (32,565 SF) will include parts storage and service bays. The fourth (32,288 SF) and roof levels will include parking. Solar equipment is proposed on the roof. The subject site is approximately 38,282 square feet in area.

Environmental Review

The project is exempt from CEQA review as a Class 32 "Infill Development" exemption pursuant to Section 15332 of the State CEQA Guidelines because after review and consideration of all required technical reports and/or studies, staff determined the Project meets all the conditions for an infill development project, as follows: a) The Project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations; b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban areas; c) The Project site has no value as a habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species; d) Approval of the Project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality; and e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

Existing Property/Background

The subject site contains the existing 12,370 square-foot Subaru dealership building and a 6,200 square-foot commercial building located at the corner of Brand Boulevard and Cypress Street, both of which will be demolished as part of the project. The applicant recently received approval of an AB 2097 parking reduction. This allowed the automobile

dealership to provide 107 parking spaces instead of the then required 445 spaces, a reduction of 338 spaces. After this approval, City Council approved changes to the parking requirements of automobile dealerships, which eliminated the requirement of parking for vehicle inventory within parking structures.

The existing Subaru dealership is located on two lots at 1308 South Brand Blvd. (subject site) and 1322 South Brand Blvd. No changes to the existing building on the site at 1322 South Brand Blvd are proposed.

Staff Recommendation

Approve with Conditions

Last Date Reviewed / Decision

First time submittal for final review.

Zone: CA - Commercial Auto **Height District:** N/A

Although this design review does not convey final zoning approval, the project has been reviewed for consistency with the applicable Codes and no inconsistencies have been identified.

Active/Pending Permits and Approvals

The applicant recently received approval for an AB 2097 parking reduction application.

Site Slope and Grading

None proposed.

DESIGN ANALYSIS

Site Planning

Are the following items satisfactory and compatible with the project site and surrounding area?

Building Location

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If "no" select from below and explain:

- ☐ Located at or near front property line
- ☐ Conforms to prevailing setbacks on the street
- ☐ Maintains appropriate sidewalk width

Usable Open Space

☐ **yes** ☒ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If "no" select from below and explain:

- ☐ Incorporates outdoor pedestrian space
- ☐ Integrated with design and overall context
- ☐ Appropriate relationship with adjoining properties

Access and Parking

☐ yes ☐ n/a ☒ no

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Parking location is appropriate to the site and its neighborhood context
- ☐ Appropriate pedestrian and vehicle access points
- ☐ Appropriate service and loading locations
- ☐ Landscape screening for street-facing parking
- ☐ Techniques employed to reduce stormwater runoff
- ☒ Decorative or colored paving to delineate pedestrian areas

The driveway access to the proposed dealership building is located in the eastern-most portion of the site along Cypress Street. Three lanes are proposed to enter the site and one lane is proposed to exit the site. The applicant shall provide decorative paving within the first 20 feet of this driveway where there are pedestrian/automobile contact zones, consistent with the Commercial Design Guidelines.

Landscape Design

☐ yes ☐ n/a ☒ no

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Complementary to building design
- ☐ Appropriately sized and located

There are five trees proposed along the Cypress Street frontage of the building – four Brisbane Box trees and one Mexican Fan Palm. The Palm is the western-most tree proposed along this frontage. The Board should consider substituting this tree for another Brisbane Box tree as it will soften this elevation of the building more than the palm without blocking the view of the showroom cars within the interior of the building.

Walls, Fences, and Retaining Walls

☐ yes ☒ n/a ☐ no

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Minimize use whenever possible
- ☐ Use decorative material to complement building and/or landscape design
- ☐ Provide landscaping to minimize visual impact

Screening

☒ yes ☐ n/a ☐ no

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Mechanical equipment appropriately screened
- ☐ Trash bins appropriately located and screened

Determination of Compatibility: 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 dealerships in the City, including the Lexus, Toyota, Infinity, BWM and Mercedes dealerships.
- The proposed building is located with little setback adjacent to both Brand Boulevard and Cypress Street with landscaping between it and the street rights-of-way to buffer and soften the appearance of the project from the adjacent streets. The Board should consider substituting the Palm for another Brisbane Box tree on the Cypress elevation to provide further softening of this elevation.
- Significant ground level glazing is proposed at the Brand Boulevard façade of the project, which will allow vision into the showroom component of the project.
- Mechanical equipment, including garbage areas and vaults, are located within the enclosed building.
- Sweet Bay trees (along with low growing Baby Bliss Flax Lily) is proposed along the eastern façade of the building (adjacent to multi-family residential) to improve the aesthetics of the façade and provide some buffering.
- As conditioned, decorative paving shall be provided within the first 20 feet of the service/driveway entrance/exit where there are pedestrian/automobile contact zones, consistent with the Commercial Design Guidelines.

Massing and Scale

Are the following items satisfactory and compatible with the project site and surrounding area?

Building Relates to its Surrounding Context

☒ yes ☐ n/a ☐ no

If "no" select from below and explain:

- ☐ Appropriate proportions and transitions
- ☐ Articulation, solid/void balance, and open space relate to predominant pattern

Building Relates to Existing Topography

☐ yes ☒ n/a ☐ no

If "no" select from below and explain:

- ☐ Form and profile follow topography
- ☐ Alteration of existing land form minimized
- ☐ Retaining walls terrace with slope to minimize height

Consistent Architectural Concept

☒ yes ☐ n/a ☐ no

If "no" select from below and explain:

- ☐ Concept governs massing and height

Scale and Proportion

☒ yes ☐ n/a ☐ no

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Articulation avoids overbearing forms
- ☐ Appropriate solid/void relationships
- ☐ Entry and major features well located

Massing

☒ yes ☐ n/a ☐ no

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Larger masses broken into separate volumes
- ☐ Long, unbroken street walls avoided
- ☐ Visual impact of larger building minimized

Determination of Compatibility: 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 massing of the project is consistent with many other automobile dealerships on the Brand Boulevard of Cars within the City.
- From Brand Boulevard, the massing of the project is mitigated with the use of storefront glazing at the ground level and the use of various materials, including obscure glass, slate tile, alucobond and glass railings. Additionally, at the fourth level, there are long openings within the façade, punctuated periodically with columns to support the fifth level.
- The eastern façade, adjacent to the existing multi-family building (zoned CA commercial auto), is set back approximately 4 feet from the property line to allow for in-ground planting, including a hedge of Sweet Bay trees to soften the appearance of this façade.
- The Cypress Street building façade is composed of stucco, storefront glass, obscure glass, and split-faced block and successfully breaks the mass of the building.
- The use of various materials breaks the wall planes and reduces the sense of solidity and mass on both the Brand and Cypress facades of the building, consistent with the City’s Design Guidelines.

Design and Detailing

Are the following items satisfactory and compatible with the project site and surrounding area?

Overall Design and Detailing

☒ yes ☐ n/a ☐ no

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Consistent architectural concept
- ☐ Proportions appropriate to project and surrounding neighborhood

- ☐ Appropriate solid/void relationships

Entryway

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Well integrated into design
- ☐ Location promotes pedestrian activity
- ☐ Design provides appropriate focal point

Storefronts and Windows

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Maximize transparency at ground floor
- ☐ 12-15’ floor-to-floor height at ground-floor is encouraged
- ☐ Coordinate design with overall style of building
- ☐ Use durable materials for windows, such as aluminum or steel
- ☐ Locate security gates/grilles inside commercial spaces, preferably set back from storefront

Awnings and Canopies

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Integrate awnings and canopies into overall building design
- ☐ Avoid long treatments spanning multiple openings
- ☐ Back-lit awnings are not allowed

Lighting

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Light fixtures are appropriate to the building design
- ☐ Avoid over-lit facades; consider ambient light conditions when developing lighting scheme
- ☐ Utilize shielded fixtures to avoid light spillover onto adjacent properties

Finish Materials and Color

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Textures and colors reinforce design

- ☐ High-quality, durable materials used, especially facing the street
- ☐ Materials appropriately enhance articulation and façade hierarchies
- ☐ Wrap corners and terminate cladding appropriately
- ☐ Cladding is well detailed, especially at junctions between materials
- ☐ Foam trim, finished on site, is prohibited

Paving Materials

☐ yes ☐ n/a ☒ no

If "no" select from below and explain:

- ☐ Decorative material at entries/driveways
- ☐ Permeable paving when possible
- ☐ Material and color related to design

As mentioned previously, decorative paving shall be provided within the first 20 feet of the service/driveway entrance/exit where there are pedestrian/automobile contact zones. Additionally, the Board should consider requiring decorative paving at the pedestrian entrance to the dealership on Brand Boulevard to assist in highlighting the main entrance to the project.

Roof Forms

☒ yes ☐ n/a ☐ no

If "no" select from below and explain:

- ☐ Configure roofline to provide visual interest and deemphasize mass
- ☐ Roof forms are consistent with overall design
- ☐ Continue roofs and parapets around building or terminate in logical manner

Determination of Compatibility: 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:

- The proposed dealership building is contemporary in style and building materials used, including storefront glazing, alucobond, slate tile, obscure glass, glass railings and smooth stucco re-enforce the design.
- The main pedestrian entrance to the dealership is appropriately located on Brand Boulevard and the canopy above it highlights the entrance. The Board should consider requiring the installation of decorative paving at the entrance to further enhance the project.
- As conditioned, decorative paving material will be installed within the driveways of the project.

Recommendation / Draft Record of Decision

Based on the above analysis, staff recommends **Approval with Conditions**. This determination is based on the implementation of the following recommended conditions:

Conditions

1. Decorative paving shall be installed within the first 20 feet of the automobile entrance/exit driveway at Cypress Street.
2. Ensure that all changes in material break at the inside corner, rather than the outside corner of the building.

Consideration

1. Consider eliminating the Palm tree on Cypress street and instead plant another Brisbane Box tree.
2. Consider installing decorative paving at the pedestrian entrance to the project at Brand Boulevard.

Attachments

1. Reduced Plans
2. Photos of Existing Property
3. Location Map
4. Environmental documents