



CITY OF GLENDALE, CA

DESIGN REVIEW STAFF REPORT – COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL / MIXED USE

June 26, 2025 <i>Hearing Date</i>	820 N Central Ave., 208 & 212 Arden Ave. <i>Address</i>
Design Review Board (DRB) <i>Review Type</i>	5644-003-081, 5644-003-073, 5644-003-033 <i>APN</i>
PDR-002693-2023 <i>Case Number</i>	Khan Consulting Inc. <i>Applicant</i>
Aileen Babakhani <i>Case Planner</i>	Arden Residences LLC <i>Owner</i>

Project Summary

To demolish an existing 5,688 square-foot commercial building (restaurant) and two surface parking lots to construct a new 105-unit, approximately 131,850 square-foot, 8-story multi-family residential building with 186 parking spaces, including 66 tandem spaces within the ground floor and two levels of subterranean parking garage. The project includes a 3,388 square-foot publicly accessible open space area. The 36,173 square-foot project site is located at the southeast corner of Central and Arden Avenue intersection, in the Downtown Specific Plan, Gateway District (DSP/Gateway) zone. The project includes:

- One studio unit, 23 one-bedroom units, 8 one-bedroom units with den, and 73 two-bedroom units
- 186 parking spaces (120 standard spaces and 66 tandem spaces) at the ground floor and within two levels of subterranean parking garage
- 3,388 square-foot publicly accessible open space at the ground floor (southwest corner of the site, fronting Central Avenue)
- A minimum 40 square-foot private balcony for each unit for a total of 6,932 square feet
- Indoor gym and recreation room at the ground floor
- Outdoor pool deck at the second floor

Environmental Review

Environmental review is not required for Stage I Design Review or the Design Review Board's advisory review; environmental review will be prepared and presented to City Council at the Stage II Design Review.

Existing Property/Background

The 36,173 square-foot (0.8-acre) project site consists of three adjoining lots and is located at the southeast corner of Central Avenue and Arden Avenue. The site is currently developed with a vacant commercial restaurant building (formerly Conrad's Restaurant), built in 1980, and two surface parking lots. All existing developments on the site will be demolished as part of the project to construct a new 105-unit, approximately 131,850 square-foot, 8-story multi-family residential building.

On November 12, 2024, the project was reviewed and approved by the City Council as Stage I Preliminary Design Review. However, the parking design has since been revised. Under the current proposal, the project utilizes AB2097 provisions to reduce the total parking spaces from the originally proposed 215 (ground floor and three-level subterranean garage) to 186 (ground floor and two-level subterranean garage). Additionally, the unit breakdown has been modified from the previously approved configuration. While the total number of units remains at 105, the revised layout now includes one studio unit, 23 one-bedroom units, eight (8) one-bedroom units with a den, and 73 two-bedroom units (revised from the original mix units of one studio unit, 37 one-bedroom units, 61 two-bedroom units, and six (6) three-bedroom units).

The project site is located within the Gateway District of the DSP. The Gateway District is located at the northern portion of the Downtown Specific Plan area and features the most visibly noted skyline of Downtown Glendale, characterized by high-rise development featuring numerous corporate headquarters. The focus of the Gateway District is the continued promotion and location of corporate headquarters, mixed-use and residential buildings, complementary/accessory services, and retail businesses at the street level, as well as the introduction of appropriate night-time entertainment uses. The table below displays the zoning and use of adjacent neighboring properties:

	Zoning	Existing Uses
North	DSP – Gateway District	1-story restaurant, surface parking lot, 19-story hotel (across Arden Avenue)
South	DSP – Gateway District	13-story hotel
East	DSP – Gateway District	5-story parking structure
West	C2-II – Commercial - High District II	1-story gas station (across Central Avenue)
Project Site	DSP – Gateway District	1-story vacant restaurant, two surface parking lots (to be demolished for the currently proposed project)

Staff Recommendation

Provide comments and recommend that City Council approve the project.

Last Date Reviewed / Decision

First time submittal for advisory review by the Design Review Board to the City Council. The City Council approved Stage I Preliminary Design Review on November 12, 2024.

Zone: (DSP/GAT) Downtown Specific Plan / Gateway District.

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

None.

Site Slope and Grading

None.

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

Landscape Design

☒ yes ☐ n/a ☐ no

If "no" select from below and explain:

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

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

No walls, fences or retaining walls are proposed at this time.

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:

- Located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Central and Arden Avenue, the subject site fronts two streets, Central Avenue and Arden Avenue, which both are designated as "Mixed-Use Commercial" street in the DSP. The project complies with the setback requirements of the DSP and provides the minimum required 18-foot setback from curb face along Central Avenue and Arden Avenue (5-ft. parkway, 10-ft. sidewalk, and 3-ft. building adjacent zone). The project provides zero interior setback on the south and east side.
The proposed building is rectangular in design and occupies almost the entire project site. The primary pedestrian access will be provided from Central Avenue and vehicular access will be from Arden Avenue. The ground level of the project contains a recreation room, gym, leasing office, entry lobby, pool room, utility rooms, a secondary exit, and 74 parking spaces. Residential dwelling units are located on the upper floors.
- The proposed floor area ratio (FAR) is 3.95 and the building height is 95 feet. An FAR of 7.25 and building height of 275 feet are the maximums for projects without utilizing the DSP Community Benefits. While the project provides 105 residential units, the maximum allowed density for the project is 207 residential units (250 units per acre). For developments with an FAR greater than 3.0, the DSP requires 20% of the gross

site area to be open space, with 10% of the gross site area to be dedicated as publicly accessible open space (50% of required open space). An additional 140 square feet of residential open space is required per residential unit (can be provided as publicly accessible open space, common open space, or private open space).

The project complies with the open space requirements of the DSP and provides a total of 3,388 square feet of publicly accessible open space, where it is required to provide a minimum of 3,336 square feet of publicly accessible open space. The proposed publicly accessible open space is appropriately integrated with the design and overall context and located on the southwest side of the building and is oriented towards Central Avenue. This area is 100 percent open to the sky and includes landscaping with an acrylic sphere fountain creating a focal point, planters, and paved areas with seating benches. Additionally, the project features a total of 15,376 square feet of residential open space in the form of private residential balconies and a pool deck on the second floor. These areas are accessible to the residents of the building and will not be publicly accessible. Landscaping, outdoor lounges and seating, and pool cabanas are proposed on the second-floor pool deck.

- Although the project is required to provide a minimum of 197 parking spaces (in accordance with the Glendale Municipal Code (GMC), Chapter 30.32.050, Table 30-32-A), it qualifies for a parking reduction pursuant to the State's AB2097 (Government Code Section 65863.2). The project provides a total of 186 parking spaces (120 standard spaces and 66 tandem spaces) within the ground level and two levels of subterranean parking garage. To comply with GMC, Chapter 30.32.173, the project provides six (6) bicycle parking spaces. Vehicular access to the parking garage is appropriate to the overall design and located off Arden Avenue. The ground floor includes habitable uses so the ground level parking, except for the parking entry is not visible from street frontages.
- The conceptual landscape plans primarily show at-grade landscaping. In general, the design minimizes the use of planters and includes benches and lightweight concrete stools which do not exceed 25% of all project landscaping within the publicly accessible open space. Conceptual landscape plans show a variety of drought-tolerant trees and shrubs. Details and specifications regarding the landscaping and planters will be reviewed as part of City Council Stage II Final Design Review.
- Utility rooms for the project are proposed at the ground level within the main body of the building and are screened from public view. The rooftop mechanical equipment is screened by parapet walls.

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

The project site features relatively flat topography.

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 project complies with the DSP's design standards. The proposed 95-foot-tall residential development has appropriately incorporated the required height and façade modulations into the design which add visual interest to both the skyline, as well as the street-level. The project is also consistent with the surrounding development, which includes tall residential and commercial buildings.
- To comply with the DSP “modulation of height” requirements, of the four available options, the project has incorporated a corner feature on the building corner at the intersection of Central and Arden Avenue. The prominent corner feature is required to be differentiated from the primary massing of the building by design features and

a minimum of 10-foot height differentiation. The project's corner feature provides a 10'-6" height differentiation and incorporates corner balconies at the upper floors and includes a combination of blue/gray metal panels and beige fiber cement panels. This corner design contrasts with the adjacent light-colored stucco and metal panels while also projecting outward from the main building façades along Central and Arden Avenue. The proposed corner feature achieves visual prominence through horizontal decorative metal belts at its top and bottom, complemented by an LED lighting system to help highlight the building corner.

- To comply with the DSP "façade modulation" requirement, the project has incorporated a clearly delineated base, middle, and top. The ground level will have stone veneer wall finish in cream color. The middle of the building is defined by the consistent use of blue/gray color metal and fiber cement cladding system (panels) and the two horizontal metal belts in russet mica color, creating a top and bottom border for the middle of the project on the north façade and partially on the east and west façade. The top of the building is defined by beige color fiber cement panels and steps back slightly from the middle of the building along north, east and west façade. The very top floor of the building will include smooth stucco finish in a lighter color with a larger setback on the south and west façade.

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

There are no commercial uses/storefronts.

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

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 contemporary/modern design of the proposed 8-story, residential project fits within its urban context in the DSP's Gateway District of taller, streamlined developments and is appropriately articulated and designed for its location, at the corner of the Central and Arden Avenue, near the 134 Freeway. The design is consistent with the design standards, policies, and intent of the DSP as it utilizes architectural solutions through the use of various high-quality building materials, colors, texture, offset massing, projections, publicly accessible open space, recessed entries, and canopies to articulate the building façade, particularly the street-facing facades along Central and Arden Avenue. The proposed details and colors create a design that is unique and identifiable, while recognizing the priorities of the DSP to promote pedestrian activities and create human-scaled architectural elements at ground level.
- The DSP requires a minimum of 50% of the street elevations to include canopies or marquees. A metal canopy is proposed between the first and second floor of the front façade, facing Central Avenue. This canopy is partially wrapping the side façades. At the upper floors, the project proposes blue/gray metal panels, beige fiber cement panels, and smooth dove grey color stucco finish. Railings on the residential balconies will be clear glass. The overall proposed materials are consistent with the contemporary aesthetic of the design and the DSP standards. A detailed look at the building materials/colors will be reviewed during the Stage II Final Design Review.
- The building's primary entrance (lobby) is located along Central Avenue. The entrance is recessed from the sidewalk and is highlighted by a metal canopy that features the building name. The base of the building along with the primary entrance will have a thin stone veneer cladding wall. The paving material for this entry area (porcelain wood-look pavers) is distinct and differentiates from the sidewalk.
- Per GMC Section 30.30.040 and the DSP standards, all exterior lighting shall be directed onto the driveways, walkways, and parking areas within the development and away from adjacent properties and public rights-of-way. Further, the DSP encourages significant architectural features such as corners or unique cornices to be illuminated and enhanced by comprehensive lighting design. A conceptual lighting plan (3d rendering) and light fixture specifications have been submitted and depicts horizontal and vertical LED light fixtures between metal cladding (upper floors and corner feature) and light fixtures under the canopies at the first floor. A final lighting plan including the lighting system and details of the pool area and the

publicly accessible open space area will be required for the Design Review Stage II, for the City Council's review.

- The DSP requires a visible and delineated roofline to visually demarcate where the building silhouette meets the sky. The overall termination at the roofline is suitable as the building facades of these areas and features roofline setbacks, a different material and color, and landscaping planters along balconies to add visual interest to the skyline.
- The fenestration design distinguishes the base from the middle and top of the building and the larger expanses of glazing are divided into smaller units. The project provides a variety of window sizes reflecting the different internal uses. This creates visual complexity that helps improve the façade modulations and is complementary to the design and scale of the building. Final details and specifications regarding the fenestration will be reviewed as part of the Stage II Final Design Review.

Recommendation / Draft Record of Decision

Based on the above analysis, staff recommends that the Design Review Board provide comments and recommend that the City Council **approve** the project proposal.

Attachments

1. Stage I Design Review packet
2. Project Plans
3. City Council Motion, dated November 12, 2024