



CITY OF GLENDALE, CA

DESIGN REVIEW STAFF REPORT – MULTI-FAMILY / MIXED USE

March 13, 2025

Hearing Date

117-121 East Fairview Avenue

Address

Design Review Board (DRB)

Review Type

5644-011-009 & 5644-011-010

APN

PDR-003828-2024

Case Number

Rodney Khan c/o Khan Consulting, Inc.

Applicant

Dennis Joe, Senior Planner

Case Planner

117 Fairview, LLC

Owner

Project Summary

The applicant is proposing to demolish seven buildings (constructed circa 1911, 1922, 1923 and 1924), and construct a new five (5)-story, 40,489 square-foot multi-family residential project with 36 residential units, featuring three (3) affordable units restricted to very low-income households and two (2) affordable units restricted to moderate income households ("Project") on a 18,260 square feet property, located in the "R-1250" - (High Density Residential) zone. Parking will be provided within an under-ground (subterranean) garage with 43 standard and 2 tandem parking spaces.

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.

Existing Property/Background

The Project site consists of two parcels (APN's 5644-011-009 & 5644-011-010) and is developed with seven (7) existing buildings addressed as 117 East Fairview Avenue, 117 East Fairview Ave - Apartment A, 117 East Fairview Avenue - Apartment B, 119 East Fairview Avenue, 121 East Fairview Avenue, 121 East Fairview Avenue – Apartment A, and an accessory building (constructed circa 1911, 1922, 1923 and 1924) will be removed in conjunction with the project.

On October 16, 2024, the Planning Commission made a recommendation via motion to City Council that the requested conditional vacation of the First Alley Easterly of Brand Boulevard, Northerly of East Fairview Avenue (Alley 130) is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive General Plan of the City of Glendale.

On August 20, 2024, the Director of Community Development approved Density Bonus & Inclusionary Housing Plan Case No. PDBP-002254-2023, to construct a new five (5)-story, multi-family residential project with 36 residential units, featuring three (3) affordable units restricted to very low-income households and two (2) affordable units restricted to moderate income households, and requested three (3) concessions:

1. Increase the maximum height and stories: In accordance with GMC Section 30.11.030 Table 30.11-B, the maximum allowed height is three stories and 36 feet. The Project proposes to increase the maximum allowed number of stories to five and the overall building height to approximately 60 feet, 11-inches (24-foot, 3-inch height increase).
2. Increase maximum allowed floor area ratio (FAR): In accordance with GMC Section 30.11.020 Table 30.11-B, the maximum allowable floor area ratio (FAR) for multi-family projects in the R-1250 zone is 1.2 (maximum 21,912 square feet for the subject Project). The applicant is requesting to exceed the maximum allowable floor area ratio. As proposed, the Project features a total FAR of 2.2 (40,489 square feet), exceeding the maximum allowable FAR by 1.0 (18,577 square feet).
3. Decrease the amount of required common outdoor space: Pursuant to GMC Section 30.11.050(c) a minimum common outdoor space of 200 square feet shall be provided per dwelling unit for the first 25 dwelling units on a lot; a minimum common outdoor space of 150 square feet shall be provided per dwelling unit for the second 25 dwelling units on a lot (the Project provides a total of 36 units is required to provide 6,650 square feet). As proposed, the Project will provide 3,220 square-feet of open space and will be deficient by 3,430 square-feet of common outdoor space.

The applicant was entitled to a 50% density bonus by providing three (3) very low-income units and entitled to a 32.5% additional density bonus on top of the existing maximum 50% density bonus by setting aside two (2) moderate-income units.

A Historical Resources Assessment Report (HRA) was prepared by Sapphos Environmental, Inc. (dated October 26, 2022) for the Project to determine if the subject property constitutes as a historical resource. The HRA determined the subject property does not appear to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, or the City of Glendale Register of Historic Resources. The subject property is a courtyard apartment complex located on two parcels had been substantially altered and lacks a cohesive design style due to construction and alterations and the vernacular cottages are not associated with a particular architectural period of significance. Further, due to lack of architectural cohesion, the subject property does not appear to be eligible for listing as a potential historic district overlay. No significant events are known to have occurred at the site and the property is not associated with any persons of historic significance. The permits for the existing buildings were reviewed and determined to not be the work of a master architect and building. The buildings are common in design, contain few character-defining features of style, and were built with common building materials and methods. Therefore, the subject property does not meet one or more eligibility criteria and is not a historic resource pursuant to Section 15064.5 (a) of the CEQA Guidelines.

Staff Recommendation

Approve with Conditions

Last Date Reviewed / Decision

First time submittal for final review.

Zone: R1250 - High Density Residential

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

Final vacation of the First Alley Easterly of Brand Boulevard, Northerly of East Fairview Avenue (Alley 130).

Site Slope and Grading

1500 cubic yards or greater of earth movement: Project grading includes approximately 12,167 cubic yards of cut (all export) to accommodate the new two level semi-subterranean garage.

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:

- ☐ Setbacks of buildings on site
- ☐ Prevailing setbacks on the street

The proposed building complies with the Zoning Code's street front setback and will be set back as close as 21-feet, 4-inches with an average setback of 27-feet, 2-inches at the ground level. The Project site planning coordinates well with the neighborhood pattern as the adjacent commercial property to the west is developed with a zero setback and the adjacent multi-family residential building to the east is approximately 15-feet from the street.

Yards and Usable Open Space

☐ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☒ **no**

If "no" select from below and explain:

- ☒ Outdoor space integrated into site design and acknowledges adjacent development
- ☐ Common space easily accessible from all units
- ☐ Appropriate separation/screening from residential units
- ☒ Discrete seating and amenity areas allow for multiple users

The Project provides 3,212 square-feet of common outdoor space and 1,262 square-feet of additional open space (total 4,474 square-feet combined) located at the western

and northern interior yards. Majority of the of building amenities, such as, concrete benches, seating areas, outdoor fireplace, outdoor bbq/ kitchen counter and an artificial turf area at the western interior yard and walkways at the northern yard. Staff recommends for the applicant to investigate potential enhancements at the northern interior yard designated as common outdoor space to be improved useable amenities.

Garage Location and Driveway

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Garage fully integrated into overall structure
- ☐ Driveway and curb-cut widths minimized
- ☐ Grade-level garages and parking, if allowed, are appropriately screened from the street
- ☐ Decorative paving complements building design
- ☐ Stairs and lifts to subterranean garages incorporated into the design of the project

Landscape Design

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Complementary to building design
- ☐ Maintain existing trees when possible
- ☐ Provide landscaping adjacent to driveways and garages
- ☐ 20% of planting at above-grade common spaces is within 9 inches of finish floor
- ☐ Above-grade tree wells are at least 6 inches higher than box size of tree

The Project’s landscaping complements the building design at all required setback areas and includes a variety of moderate and low water California-friendly plants, such as, Marina Strawberry trees, Sweet Bay trees, Blue Flame Agave, Kangaroo Paws, Breeze Mat Rush and Deer Grass.

Walls and Fences

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Appropriate style/color/material for building design
- ☐ Perimeter walls treated at both sides
- ☐ Retaining walls minimized
- ☐ Appropriately sized and located

Equipment, Trash, and Drainage

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Equipment screened and well located
- ☐ Trash storage out of public view
- ☐ All screening integrated with overall building and/or landscape design
- ☐ Downspouts appropriately located

- ☐ Vents, utility connections integrated with design, avoid primary facades

Lighting

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

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

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 commercial property to the west has a zero setback and the multi-family residential building to the east features a 15-foot setback. The project aligns well with the street front setbacks at 21-feet, 4-inches and 27-feet, 2-inches average at the ground level.
- The Project includes 4,474 square feet of combined common and open space, featuring amenities like benches, seating areas, a fireplace, BBQ counters, and artificial turf in the western yard. A condition is recommended for applicant to enhance the northern yard with useable amenities to improve the overall outdoor space for future residents.
- The proposed landscaping design complements the building at all required setback areas and includes a variety of moderate and low water California-friendly plants, such as, Marina Strawberry trees, Sweet Bay trees, Blue Flame Agave, Kangaroo Paws, Breeze Mat Rush and Deer Grass.

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:

- ☐ Relates to predominant pattern through appropriate proportions and transitions
- ☐ Impact of larger building minimized

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

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:

- ☐ Scale and proportion fit context
☐ Articulation avoids overbearing forms
☐ Appropriate solid/void relationships
☐ Entry and major features well located
☐ Avoids sense of monumentality

Roof Forms

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Roof reinforces design concept
☐ Configuration appropriate to context

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 site is surrounded by 1- and 2-story commercial businesses (bank, retail, restaurants, etc.) to the south and west, a place of worship (St. Mark’s Episcopal Church) to the north, and 2-story multi-family residences to the east. While the 5-story project is larger than the adjacent development, it incorporates a variety of architectural strategies to reduce the building’s bulk. These include code-compliant interior setbacks of 14 feet (east, abutting multi-family residences), 16 feet (north, abutting St. Mark’s Church), and 14 feet (west, abutting Citizens Business Bank), step-backs at elevations, recessed balconies, Juliette balconies, and a variety of roof designs, including gabled, hipped, and flat, which vary in height as viewed from the interior facing elevations.

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:

- ☐ Design is compatible with neighborhood context
- ☐ Design is stylistically consistent
- ☐ Employs consistent vocabulary of forms and materials while expressing architectural variety
- ☐ Cladding materials and features such as balconies, canopies, and trim elements enhance the architectural concept and are applied around the building

Entryway

☒ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☐ **no**

If "no" select from below and explain:

- ☐ Well integrated into design
- ☐ Avoids sense of monumentality
- ☐ Design provides appropriate focal point
- ☐ Doors appropriate to design

Windows

☐ **yes** ☐ **n/a** ☒ **no**

If "no" select from below and explain:

- ☐ Appropriate to overall design
- ☐ Overall window pattern appropriate to style
- ☐ Window operation appropriate to style
- ☒ Recessed/flush window appropriate to style and/or location
- ☐ Openings are well detailed

The project proposes a combination of horizontal sliding, double-hung, casement, and fixed windows with a 3-over-2 grid pattern, constructed from vinyl in a bronze color. While the drawings do not specify the window placement (e.g., flush or recessed into the walls), staff recommends that the windows throughout the building be recessed with window sills and stucco bullnose surrounds. This would help avoid a monotonously flat wall surface at elevations and align with the aesthetic depicted in the elevations and renderings. Additionally, staff recommends using durable, high-quality window materials, such as fiberglass, rather than vinyl, with three-dimensional grids.

Finish Materials and Color

☐ yes ☐ n/a ☒ no

If “no” select from below and explain:

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

Roofing finish materials include ‘S’ tile on the building’s pitched roofs. To better coordinate with the architectural design, staff recommends that the project incorporate barrel clay tiles in place of the ‘S’ tiles. This change would reinforce the Spanish-style design and complement the half-barrel tile caps shown above the roof parapets throughout the building.

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

Ancillary Structures

☒ yes ☐ n/a ☐ no

If “no” select from below and explain:

- ☐ Design consistent with primary structure
- ☐ Design and materials of gates, fences, and/or walls complement primary structure

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 immediate neighborhood along Fairview Avenue features numerous multi-family dwellings in a variety of styles. The proposed style of the dwelling is well designed and will enhance the architectural quality of the surrounding area.
- The materials and finishes are appropriate to the design of the building, which includes smooth cement plaster, fabric awnings, metal gutters, metal railings at balconies, and decorative tile around entries ways at the ground level leading into shared corridors.
- To coordinate better with the architectural design, staff recommends the Project should incorporate barrel clay tiles in lieu of “S” tiles to reinforce the Spanish-style design and complement the half barrel tile caps drawn above roof parapets throughout the building.

- While the drawings do not identify the window placement (e.g., flush or recessed into the walls), staff recommends a condition for the windows throughout the building to be recessed with window sills and stucco bullnose surrounds, in order to avoid a monotonously flat wall surface at elevations and to match the aesthetic depicted in the elevations and renderings. Additionally, staff recommends that window materials should be durable and of high quality, such as fiberglass, instead of vinyl, with three-dimensional grids.

Recommendation / Draft Record of Decision

Based on the above analysis, staff recommends **approval** of the project with **conditions**, as follow:

Conditions

1. The common open space area in the northern interior yard should be enhanced with usable amenities to improve the overall quality of the common outdoor space for residents.
2. The windows throughout the building should be recessed with window sills and stucco bullnose surrounds to avoid a monotonously flat wall surface at elevations and to match the aesthetic depicted in the elevations and renderings. Additionally, staff recommends using durable, high-quality window materials, such as fiberglass, instead of vinyl, with three-dimensional grids.
3. In place of “S” roof tiles, barrel clay tiles should be used to reinforce the Spanish-style design and complement the half-barrel tile caps above the roof parapets throughout the building.

Attachments

1. Reduced Plans
2. Photos of Existing Property
3. Location Map
4. Material Board
5. Class 32 In-fill Development Projects Exemption