



## CITY OF GLENDALE, CA

### DESIGN REVIEW STAFF REPORT – MULTI-FAMILY / MIXED USE

**July 13, 2023**

*Hearing Date*

**1303 - 1315 North Central Avenue**

*Address*

**Design Review Board (DRB)**

*Review Type*

**5633-006-014**

*APN*

**PDR 2209209**

*Case Number*

**Gregory Brody**

*Applicant*

**Cassandra Pruett**

*Case Planner*

**Central BWB, LLC**

*Owner*

#### Project Background and Summary

Preliminary design review application to demolish a 37-unit apartment complex (built in 1957) and construct a 131-unit apartment building (density bonus affordable housing project), three to six stories in height, with two parking levels (237 parking spaces) and 14 very low-income units, on an approximately 86,025 SF lot in the R-1250 (High Density Residential) Zone.

This is a PRELIMINARY review, and no decision will be made at this meeting. The Design Review Board is being asked to provide direction related to site planning, mass and scale, and design and detailing to enable further project refinement prior to submittal of the Density Bonus and Design Review applications. No environmental determination or review is required for preliminary design review. Environmental review will be completed prior to any future discretionary decision.

The project site is an approximately 86,025 SF, irregularly shaped, double-fronting lot that fronts North Central Avenue for a length of 286 feet, and Viola Avenue for 75 feet at the end of the cul-de-sac. The site gradually slopes a few feet down from north to south and east to west, with the highest point being at the northeast corner and the lowest point at the southwest corner. The site is developed with an apartment complex consisting of three two-story apartment buildings and associated parking garages, constructed in 1957.

The project site is adjacent to the following zones and building heights:

Direction	Zone	Stories
North	R-1250	Two stories
East	R-1250	One to three stories
South	R-1250	One to three stories
Northwest	R1-I	One story
Southwest	R-1250	One story

The proposed multi-family project includes two apartment buildings ranging in height from three to six stories with two parking levels below, and a smaller two-story leasing office. Primary access is from North Central Avenue, which includes pedestrian access to the building lobby and driveway access to the two lower parking levels. The two buildings are located at the north and south sides of the property, with a large open space courtyard in the center, and a smaller open space pool area at the west side of the property. The leasing office faces North Central Avenue adjacent to the central courtyard.

The project consists of 18 one-bedroom units, 74 two-bedroom units, 38 three-bedroom units and one four-bedroom unit. Of those units, 14 are proposed as very low-income units: two one-bedroom units, eight two-bedroom units, and four three-bedroom units. Review of the affordable units will be conducted when the Density Bonus Application is submitted. The project also includes a two-story recreation room, a gym, and a two-story leasing office. Required parking for the affordable housing project is 187 stalls, including 131 non-tandem, accessible spaces, and the project proposes 237 stalls with 160 accessible spaces and 77 tandem parking spaces, in accordance with State Density Bonus Law.

The project will be developed as one podium structure across the site with two primary building forms above, connected by a four-story pedestrian bridge. The northern-most building ranges from three to five stories with two underground parking levels. The southern-most building ranges from three to five stories with one underground parking level and another parking level that also contains dwelling units. The building forms along Central Avenue are three-stories, stepping in and up toward the west to five stories. At the southwestern area of the site (facing Viola Avenue), the building is considered to be six stories, per the Zoning Code.

### **Development Standards**

The Zoning Code development standards for the zone (R-1250 High-Density Residential) include the following. State Density Bonus Law allows up to an additional 50% density, parking concessions, and additional concessions and waivers from Zoning Code Standards if affordable housing is provided. Those standards will be reviewed with the future Density Bonus Review application but have been found to be in substantial compliance at this time.

Maximum Density – 86 units (one unit for every 1,000 SF of lot area)

Maximum Floor Area Ratio – 1.2

Maximum Lot Coverage – 50%

Setbacks:

Street front – 1<sup>st</sup> residential floor - 20 feet (FT) min.; 23 FT average.

2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> residential floor – 23 FT min.; 26 FT average.

Street side – 1<sup>st</sup> residential floor – 5 FT min.; 8 FT average.

2<sup>nd</sup> residential floor – 8 FT min.; 11 FT average.

3<sup>rd</sup> residential floor – 11 FT min.; 14 FT average.

Interior - 1<sup>st</sup> residential floor – 5 FT min.; 8 FT average.

2<sup>nd</sup> residential floor – 8 FT min.; 11 FT average.

3<sup>rd</sup> residential floor – 11 FT min.; 14 FT average.

Interior abutting R1 - 1<sup>st</sup> residential floor – 8 FT min.; 11 FT average.

2<sup>nd</sup> residential floor – 11 FT min.; 14 FT average.

3<sup>rd</sup> residential floor – 17 FT min.; 20 FT average.

Maximum height – Three stories and 36 FT  
Minimum landscaped open space – 25% of lot area  
Minimum Dwelling unit size – One bedroom – 600 SF  
Two bedroom – 800 SF  
Three bedroom – 1,000 SF  
Private outdoor space – Minimum 40 SF for each dwelling unit  
Common outdoor space – Minimum 200 SF per dwelling unit for the first 25 units  
150 SF per dwelling unit for the second 25 units  
100 SF per dwelling unit for each unit above 50 units  
Private storage space – Minimum 90 cubic feet (CF) or each dwelling unit  
Parking – Efficiencies, one and two bedrooms – 2 parking spaces  
Three bedrooms – 2.5 parking spaces  
Four bedrooms – 3 parking spaces  
¼ guest space per unit

### **Environmental Review**

No environmental determination has been made at this time since none is required for preliminary design review. Environmental review will be completed prior to any future discretionary decision.

### **Active/Pending Permits and Approvals**

Choose an item.

There are no active or pending applications or permits at this time.

**DENSITY BONUS:** The applicant will be required to submit a Density Bonus application as part of the affordable housing project. The 131 residential units currently proposed represent a 50% density bonus from the maximum of 86 units that would otherwise be permitted by right to be developed; this 50% density bonus is permitted by State Law. The Density Bonus Law also allows for incentives and waivers requests from the City's development standards, depending on the level of affordability. At this time, the developer is proposing incentives/waivers for the following standards:

- Height and number of stories (80 feet versus 41 feet allowed, and six stories versus three stories allowed);
- Floor Area Ratio (2.3 versus 1.2 allowed); and
- Interior setbacks (10'-7" versus 11' required for the north side at third and fourth floors, and 8'-0" versus 11'-0" required at south side for floor level three).

Additional incentives/waivers may be identified when the project proposal is finalized following preliminary design review, and the number and type of incentives/waivers will be verified upon formal review of the density bonus project by the City of Glendale Housing Division.

### **Staff Comments**

#### **Site Planning**

- The building's location on Central Avenue is aligned with the prevailing setback of the street (approximately 20 feet from the property line and 40 feet from the curb). On Viola Avenue, the setback provided exceeds the prevailing setback on the street.
- A large central courtyard area features open space and landscaping. An existing pool area to remain is located at the west side, abutting the single-family residential

zone). Tall dense landscaping should be provided to help buffer the pool area from the adjacent single-family zoned properties.

- Ground floor units along Central Avenue have direct access from defined entries facing the street, and private patios facing common open space areas along the central courtyard and interior setback areas. Entry patios located at other facades transition in a layered fashion between the units and common open space. Vehicular access is from a single driveway on Central Avenue that accesses the lower-level parking garage. To minimize disruptions along the street and focus on pedestrian safety, the driveway width should be reduced in width from 28 feet to 20 feet, and decorative paving should be added at the driveway entrance.
- The proposed landscaping is appropriate to the architectural style of the building. The final DRB landscaping plan will need to demonstrate that all varieties are low water use and appropriate to the Glendale climate region.
- An existing four and half feet (4'-6") to eight feet (8'-0") high property boundary wall is proposed to remain. It should be refaced to be consistent with exterior finish materials of the new building and must comply with setback standards.

### **Mass and Scale**

- The project proposal is based on application of State Density Bonus Law which permits larger residential buildings that exceed the by-right development standards, in accordance with the waiver and concession regulations; the project will be applying for increased height/stories, increased floor area ratio and reduced interior setbacks. As such, the project appears much more massive than the existing on-site conditions and adjacent developments. The project somewhat well addresses mass and scale directly along Central Avenue and could be better integrated with the one- and two-story residential buildings along the interior property lines.
- While the project is designed with two separate volumes above the podium level, which helps break up the overall massing, it still appears massive and out-of-scale to neighboring properties. The project should use a variety of architectural strategies to express or break up the massing, including variations in building height, setbacks, stepping, and recessed volumes.
- The building steps down along Central Avenue (east elevation) to feature mostly three-story massing at the street level but does not have significant stepping down at the other façade locations. Again, adding in the reduced interior setbacks, the transitional massing of the interior façade in relation to the adjacent buildings should be improved.
- As set forth in the guidelines, building massing should follow the topography of the site, which decreases several feet from northeast to southwest, whereas building massing currently increases in this direction.
- The central courtyard helps break up the building massing as visible from the street; however, the tall elevator tower and pedestrian bridge beyond fill in that space. These features should be reduced in apparent mass and scale to the extent possible.
- The central elevator tower, as viewed on the east, street-facing elevation, appears too tall; consider ways to soften height.
- Roof forms are appropriate to the style of the project and have varied heights and forms, particularly as visible from Central Avenue.

## Design and Detailing

- The architectural style and design elements are consistent across the building while also expressing architectural variation.
- The building façade at Viola Avenue is appropriately designed to enhance the pedestrian experience (does not look like the back or side of a building).
- Building facades, as viewed from the interior courtyard, are designed well and consistent with the exterior facades.
- Balconies are featured along exterior and interior facades, are integrated into the architectural style, and feature railing designs appropriate to the style. However, patios and balconies should be redesigned to not overlook the backyards of adjacent single-family homes to the west.
- The primary building entrance on Central Avenue is recessed and articulated with open space and landscaping.
- The project's windows and doors are well placed and well sized, proportional to façades, and help enhance the building design.
- Windows should be recessed with sills and use external grids (not between glass), consistent with the architectural style.
- Window placement in relation to neighboring structures should be staggered and not directly opposite windows in adjacent buildings.
- Lighting fixtures are shown at the entry patios along Central Avenue; no other exterior lighting is shown on façade elevations. Additional lighting information will need to be provided for the final DRB submittal.
- The building design includes high-quality materials including Spanish roof tile, smooth plaster, stone, Fibrex windows and doors, wood corbels, and metal railing.
- Both covered covered cornices and exposed rafter tails have been used; this detailing should be consistent across project.
- The color scheme includes natural colors appropriate to the building style.
- Decorative paving is used on walkways approaching and into the building.
- The trash collection area is located in the lower-level parking. Rooftop equipment is screened by parapets.

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## Attachments

1. Location Map
2. Plans
3. Renderings
4. Site Photos
5. Neighborhood Photos