



La Salle Townhomes – Project Narrative

RE: Project site 4034 La Salle Avenue, Culver City, CA 90232

Project Team Information:

Development Team:
4034 La Salle Development
528 Pacific Palisades DR. #530
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

Site Information:

Lot size is 6,750 sf. There is an existing 1,424 sf. Single family residence on the property. The site is a part of the Residential Medium Density (RMD) zoning per the Culver City Municipal Code (Zoning Code).

The proposed project is a 2-story, 4-unit residential condominium building, over a semi-subterranean parking garage that accommodates 9 parking spaces.

The building has been prepared in accordance with the Culver City Municipal Code as well as the “Gateway Adjacent Neighborhood Multi-Family Residential Design Guidelines”.

The current version of the proposed building has been significantly modified from the original concept design. It has been modified and refined through several meetings with the Culver City Planning Department, in addition to our Neighborhood Community Meeting.

Following is a brief review of the different iterations of the building as it has been critiqued and refined in order to best fit within its surrounding context and best meet the Neighborhood Guidelines.

Initial Architectural Concept Design: December 15, 2015

One of the most important design elements that the neighborhood guidelines stresses is that any new building strives to maintain and enhance the existing context. Thus, the initial design concept aims to minimize the impact of the

driveway, while focusing on the two private front yards that are at pedestrian friendly scale. The front yards will be planted with drought tolerant plants, that have different heights providing a buffer and screening element.

The initial Architectural Conceptual Design, presented to the client, was of a modern minimal design with the main visual articulation being the large square windows. The windows were to be installed at slight angles to the exterior walls, creating discrete variations within the buildings façade. Upon presenting this proposal to our clients, they encouraged us to manipulate the façade further.

Total Unit Areas: 7,530 sf

Unit – A: 1,598 sf
Unit – B: 1,802 sf
Unit – C: 2,057 sf
Unit – D: 2,073 sf

Refer to Exhibit A

Concept Design presented to City for discussion: December 29, 2015

In an attempt to create this condition we kept the second floor at a 15' setback and pushed the first floor to a 17' setback. Thus, the second story created a covered entry overhang for two of the residential units. The top of the building was given a slope to simulate the sloped roofs of the neighboring properties.

The comments from the Planning Department indicated that the building looked too “Boxy” and would benefit from more articulation, not only at the front of the building but throughout all the building’s elevations.

Total Unit Areas: 7,118 sf

Unit – A: 1,509 sf
Unit – B: 1,640 sf
Unit – C: 2,030 sf
Unit – D: 1,939 sf

Refer to Exhibit B

Design for Submittal to Project Planning Review: March 03, 2016

Taking into consideration the planning department’s comments, the second floor was reduced in size. The second floor elements that still extended over the first floor entry doors were not only smaller but became more “playful” shapes. The façade articulation was carried around to the entire building’s elevations, making a

visual distinction between the 4 different units. At this time it was decided to take advantage of the slope at the second floor master bedrooms, and vaulted ceilings were added.

We received a list of comments from the Planning Department indicating that we were not fully complying with the intent of the neighborhood guidelines. Chief among the concerns were the height of the building's parapet walls which were listed at 31.5', lot coverage being 64%, and the fact that the second floor was protruding over the first floor. Concern about the roof deck that extended to the building edge were brought up, asking us to think about and address possible privacy concerns.

Total Unit Areas: 7,028 sf

Unit – A: 1,560 sf

Unit – B: 1,687 sf

Unit – C: 1,936 sf

Unit – D: 1,845 sf

Refer to Exhibit C

PPR RE-Submittal: March 21, 2016

In response the design team reduced the building lot coverage to 61% and reduced the building height to 28'. The solution still had the second floor extending over the first floor, but now the second floor was reduced in area as well as being broken down into two smaller shapes. The vaulted ceilings at the second floor master bedrooms were also eliminated in order to reduce the overall building height. The reason that the second floor was still extending beyond the first floor is because the design team felt very strongly that this created an actual physical benefit to the residents as well as an attractive and unique method of building articulation.

The private roof decks were reduced in area in order to bring the guardrails at least 2' from the buildings edge, thus reducing privacy concerns for residents and neighbors alike.

Culver City planning department allowed us to proceed to the Community Meeting on the condition that we push the second floor further back than the first. At this meeting it was made clear that this was a must in order for this project to fully comply with the neighborhood guidelines.

Total Unit Areas: 6,906 sf

Unit – A: 1,552 sf

Unit – B: 1,655 sf

Unit – C: 1,894 sf

Unit – D: 1,805 sf

Refer to Exhibit D

Community Meeting: June 01, 2016

This was a significant redesign to the front portion of the building. The solution was to setback the second floor two feet from the first floor, we also added a slight bend to the second floor in order to play with light and shadows ever so slightly.

The main criticism from the five communities members present, was their displeasure with any type of new development, the potential impact on street parking issues, privacy concerns and noise issues both during construction and post occupancy.

We explained that we are parking the project per Culver City municipal code standards, construction will only be allowed as per the conditions the City allows, we promised to do a window study to show that neighboring windows and new project windows will not be aligned if at all possible.

Total Unit Areas: 6,947 sf

Unit – A: 1,566 sf

Unit – B: 1,683 sf

Unit – C: 1,892 sf

Unit – D: 1,806 sf

Refer to Exhibit E

Site Plan Review Submittal: July 06, 2016

Taking into consideration some of the comments from the community members, the design team decided to break down the front elevation. The second floor was broken up down the middle, and the first floor entry doors were given private entry alcoves. These design solutions provide the building with some added detail and precision that reduce the overall mass of the building.

We believe that the many meetings with City staff and community members, as well as internal design meetings and charrettes have led us to a much better building than originally conceived. The constructive comments have refined the

building's design and have lead to a charming design that will be a positive contributor to its neighbors.

Total Unit Areas: 6,887 sf

Unit – A: 1,536 sf

Unit – B: 1,653 sf

Unit – C: 1,892 sf

Unit – D: 1,806 sf

Refer to Exhibit F











