



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

File #: 22-1084, **Version:** 1

Item #: 2.

PC - PUBLIC HEARING: Consideration of a Site Plan Review and Administrative Use Permit for the Construction of a 4-Story, 11,100 Square Foot Office Structure with At-Grade Parking at 12300 Washington Boulevard (Project).

Meeting Date: June 8, 2022

Contact Person/Dept: William Kavadas, Assistant Planner
Erika Ramirez, Current Planning Manager

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Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing: ☒

Action Item: ☐

Attachments: ☒

City Council Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☒

Date: N/A

Public Notification: (Mailed) Property owners and occupants within a 500-foot radius and extended (05/18/22); Onsite Sign (05/18/22); Posted on City Website (05/19/22); Meetings and Agendas - Planning Commission (06/01/22)

Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (05/28/2022)

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission 1) Adopt a Class 32 Categorical Exemption, pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Section 15332 In-Fill Development Projects and 2) Approve Site Plan Review and Administrative Use Permit (P2021-0316-SPR/AUP) subject to the Conditions of Approval as stated in Resolution No. 2022-P011 (Attachment No. 1).

PROCEDURES:

1. Chair calls on staff for a brief staff report and Planning Commission poses questions to staff as desired.
2. Chair opens the public hearing, providing the applicant the first opportunity to speak, followed by the general public.
3. Chair seeks a motion to close the public hearing after all testimony has been presented.
4. Planning Commission discusses the matter and arrives at its decision.

BACKGROUND:**Request**

On October 12, 2021, an application was submitted by ODAA Architects (the Applicant) on behalf of Jacmar Properties LLC (the Property Owner) for a Site Plan Review and Administrative Use Permit. The application request is to allow the following:

- Demolition of an existing 2,984 square foot non-residential commercial building;
- Approval of a Site Plan Review (SPR) to construct a four-story, 11,100 square foot commercial office building with at-grade parking for 32 vehicles; and
- Approval of an Administrative Use Permit (AUP) to utilize tandem parking configuration to meet onsite parking requirement.

Project Site/Existing Conditions

The Project Site is located at 12300 Washington Boulevard, at the south corner of the intersection of Washington Boulevard and Campbell Drive (see Vicinity Map, Attachment No. 2). The Site is comprised of two parcels, one in the City of Culver City, the second in the City of Los Angeles, measuring 12,030 square feet in total area. The larger of the two parcels is in Culver City, fronts Washington Boulevard, is in the Commercial General (CG) zone and has a General Corridor General Plan land use designation. The Culver City parcel will contain the entirety of the proposed structure. The second parcel in the City of Los Angeles and is zoned C2 Commercial. This lot will contain the surface vehicular parking, bike parking and utility equipment. The City of Los Angeles has relinquished their review to the City of Culver City for the Los Angeles parcel (Attachment No. 3).

The Site is currently improved with two single-story commercial structures and surface parking. Vehicular access to the existing parcels is provided by two existing driveways off Campbell Drive. The Site abuts a residential property to the south within the City of Los Angeles and a commercial property to the west that is split between the two jurisdictions. Seven-foot-wide sidewalks exist along Campbell Drive and Washington Boulevards. There are four mature palm trees on the right-of-way adjacent to the Project Site, two on Campbell Drive and two on Washington Boulevard.

Table 1: Surrounding Zoning and Land Use

Location	Zoning	Land Use
North	CG	Multi-Family Apartments
South	City of Los Angeles	Multi-Family Apartments
East	CG	Bar/Restaurant
West	CG	Commercial Bank

Project Description

The applicant proposes to demolish all existing on-site improvements and construct a four-story commercial development. The ground floor will be used for lobby/reception while upper floors are intended for office use. The ground level parking area is proposed to provide 30 standard tandem stalls and 2 accessible spaces. As seen in Attachment No. 4, the proposed project meets all Municipal Code standards for the CG Zone.

Vehicular access to the at-grade parking area is provided from Campbell Drive. The primary pedestrian entrance is located on Washington Boulevard. Short term bicycle parking stalls are located adjacent to the primary pedestrian entrance, while long term bike parking is located within the main lobby. Additional bike parking spaces are located on the south end of the site along Campbell Drive. A trash room is located on the ground level and will be accessed from inside the parking lot.

Additionally, the Project proposes to provide all non-accessible parking spaces in tandem configuration. Tandem parking requires approval of an Administrative Use Permit in non-residential districts.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION:

Architectural Design/Neighborhood Compatibility

The four-story building includes three full levels with a stepback on level four to provide tenant amenity space. In addition, the center of the building along Campbell Street includes upper floor patios with landscaping features. Together, these design features reduce street-facing building mass while providing building facade variation. The building uses large windows on the street facing frontage to further vary the façade. At street level, breezeblock screening will create a barrier between the sidewalk and interior garage. The lobby at Washington Boulevard will have glass windows that allow pedestrian to see into the first level of the building.

The color palette of the finish surface is comprised of red brick veneer and grey CMU, both compatible with the black metal of the windows and wood columns along the lobby. At its highest point, the building is no more than 51 feet, including elevator projections, in conformance with the 56-foot height limit allowed in the CG Zone.

The parking lot is accessed from Campbell Drive and located behind the building, thus reducing automobile presence along Washington Boulevard. The location of the parking lot provides a greater building setback from adjacent residential uses, minimizing perception of bulk and mass. A line of trees and eight-foot-tall block wall is proposed along the rear property line to provide additional separation and buffer from the adjacent residential use.

The Project design is compatible with the contemporary architectural style that has been developed along Washington Boulevard in recent years and includes brick veneer finish. Preliminary Development Plans are included as Attachment No. 5.

Landscaping

The Project proposes adequate landscaping features on the property in spite of constraints such as building footprint, site size, and necessary site access points for automobiles and other mobility features. The second and third floor courtyard will have California Fan Palm planting that will reach from the ground floor through to the second floor at the time of planting. Other planters are located at the courtyard and roof level to provide additional landscape. At ground level, a row of Brisbane box trees is located along the rear of the property while grasscrete is used for half of the parking spaces. An additional tree will be planted in the micro mobility parking area adjacent to the driveway apron. The public right-of-way will be planted to the standards of the City's Urban Forest Master Plan through separate off-site construction plans. Preliminary landscape information is included as part of Attachment No. 5.

Traffic, Parking and Circulation

The proposed Project would remove and replace one driveway apron with curb and gutter while relocating an existing driveway apron further north on Campbell Drive to provide access to the parking area. The drive aisle

would be 24 feet 2 inches wide, providing enough maneuverability area for automobiles to enter and exit the project site facing forward.

The Zoning Code requires one space per 350 square feet of gross floor area for the proposed office use. For the proposed area of 11,100 square feet, the Project is required to provide 32 spaces. The proposed Project provides 32 parking spaces: 30 tandem parking spaces and 2 accessible parking spaces. The Project also requests an Administrative Use Permit to allow tandem configuration. The applicant proposes to have a valet stand on the public right-of-way to provide the required accessible passenger loading space off-site due to on-site constraints. The applicant has proposed for incoming drivers to self-park in the morning by parking in the first row before parking in the second row. Those parking in the second row will provide their keys to the valet attendant who will move cars in the second row as needed throughout the day. The valet parking operations are subject to City approval as a project condition. Valet operations would begin at 7AM and end at 6PM. After valet hours, keys will be kept locked in the lobby for any employees leaving after normal business hours.

As required by the Zoning Code, the Public Works Mobility and Traffic Engineering Division reviewed and approved the Applicant's request for a passenger loading space in the right-of-way since the closure of one existing driveway creates a new on-street parking space. Further, the space is used for general on-street parking outside of the valet operating times between 7AM and 6PM Monday through Friday and on weekends.

The applicant meets EV parking requirements per Zoning Code Section 17.320.035.O by providing six EV Capable spaces, three EV Ready spaces, and three EV Chargers. Additionally, two short term bicycle parking spaces are provided adjacent to Washington Boulevard within the property boundaries and two long term bicycle parking spaces are provided within the main lobby.

Mobility and Transportation Demand Measures (TDM)

The Applicant has also provided a Preliminary Mobility and TDM Plan (Attachment No. 6) that proposes the following measures to promote active transportation to the site. The proximity to transit lines along Washington Boulevard and nearby Centinela Avenue will provide improved access to employees and visitors to the subject site.

- Discounted Transit Passes - The applicant team will provide up to 44 Transit Access Passes (TAP Cards) to employees who will exchange an on-site parking space for an annual regional transit pass.
- Centralized Transportation Information Display - a digital display board in the lobby will provide information such as transit maps and schedules.

In addition, the applicant team proposes additional active transportation options to compliment transit trips including the following:

- Micro-Mobility Parking Zone and Additional Bike Parking Stalls - The applicant has provided additional bicycle racks and a micro-mobility parking zone in the rear of the site near Campbell Drive.
- On-Site Shower Facility - Within the main lobby, the applicant has provided a bathroom with shower facilities to aid bike commuters.

Noise

Proposed use for the project is professional office. In all reasonable scenarios, the level of noise that the Project generates would be typical of a nonresidential development. Open spaces are mostly oriented towards Campbell Drive and Washington Boulevard and the building itself has a greater setback from the residential zone than would otherwise be required for a building of this height. The line of trees along the rear property

line will also help to block noise from the adjacent residential uses. All mechanical equipment is proposed within a second-floor rooftop area facing away from residential uses. Hours of operation of the building are typical of office uses, and the building typically is unoccupied overnight. While use for upper floors may change over time it is expected that alternate uses have similar hours of operation and generate similar noise levels commensurate with allowable uses for the CG Zone, the number of parking spaces onsite, and the floor plan of the upper floors.

Construction Management

A final Construction Management Plan, Pedestrian Protection Plan, and Construction Traffic Management Plan is required prior to building permit issuance to minimize potential for disruptions resulting from the construction related activities for the project. Per the Conditions of Approval, the Construction Management and Traffic Control Plans will incorporate measures for noise reduction and dust control, and will specify detailed construction phases and timelines, construction and crew vehicle parking, on-site staging areas, pedestrian path of travel and coordination of construction deliveries.

PUBLIC OUTREACH:

As part of the review process, two virtual community meeting were held for the project. The first meeting was held on December 17, 2020, and the second meeting on July 21, 2021. The applicant sent invitations two weeks before the meeting to property owners and occupants within a 500-foot radius and extended area from the site, inviting interested persons to learn about the development project, provide comments and feedback, as well as to share any concerns regarding the proposed Project. Two members of the public attended the first meeting while no members of the public attended the second meeting. The topics of discussion at the first meeting were as follows:

- Concern about change in dynamic of neighborhood
- Questions about development timelines
- Desire to find a tenant for the current site with as little impact as possible with minimal or no development modification of the existing site.

As there were no attendees to the second community meeting, no additional comment was received from the public. The applicant team worked cooperatively with staff to create a project compatible to the surrounding community. The subject building is setback from adjacent residential uses beyond what code would otherwise require. The proposed at-grade parking will reduce construction impacts as no subterranean garage is proposed. The design of the structure adds to the aesthetic appeal of Washington Boulevard, and the unique design choices create a structure that provides a reduced bulk and mass along the street frontage.

Comments Received During Public Comment Period

Public notices were mailed and a public notice sign was posted on May 18, 2022. As of the writing of this report, staff has not received any inquiries for this Project.

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY:

The proposed Project will redevelop a corner parcel that is currently used for office use. The Site is located on the Washington Boulevard corridor that has seen new investment and increased pedestrian amenities over the past several years. Staff believes that the Applicant's proposal will further activate the commercial corridor and create an aesthetically pleasing building. Based on the development plans, building design, and recommended conditions of approval, findings are made to approve the Project Site Plan Review and

Administrative Use Permit (P-2021-0316-SPR/AUP) as outlined in proposed Planning Commission Resolution No. 2022-P011.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, initial review of the project by staff established that there are no potentially significant adverse impacts on the environment and the proposed project has been determined to be a Class 32 Categorical Exemption as an “In-Fill Development Project” (Section 15332), supported by the Technical Studies provided by the Applicant (Attachment No. 7). CEQA Class 32 consists of projects characterized as in-fill development meeting the following conditions:

- (a) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all 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 uses.
- (c) The project site has no value, as 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.
- (e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

The project involves the construction of a four-story building containing 11,100 square feet of commercial floor area and 32 at-grade parking spaces, as well as additional site improvements and amenities. Further, the proposed project is consistent with the Culver City General Plan Land Use Designation of General Corridor development standards and the Los Angeles City General Plan and applicable Zoning. It is located within city limits of Culver City and the City of Los Angeles, is surrounded by urban uses, and has no value as a habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species as it is currently developed with two one-story commercial structures, paved vehicle circulation and walkways, and vegetation consistent with adjacent non-residential development.

Based on the scale of the Project and the proposed land use, the Project will not have significant traffic impacts and conforms to the City’s Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) ordinance per Attachment No. 8. As an office-use development surrounded by a mix of non-residential and residential development, noise and air quality impacts generated by the project will be within established thresholds. Implementation of the City’s storm water run-off standards will result in less than significant impacts to water quality and the project can be adequately served by utilities and public services.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

The following alternative actions may be considered by the Planning Commission:

1. Approve the proposed project with the recommended conditions of approval if the applications are deemed to meet the required findings.
2. Approve the proposed project with additional and/or different conditions of approval, if deemed necessary to meet the required findings and mitigate any new project impacts identified at the meeting.
3. Disapprove the proposed project if the applications do not meet the required findings.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed Planning Commission Resolution No. 2022-P011 with Exhibit A-Conditions of Approval and Exhibit B-Standard Code Requirements
2. Vicinity Map
3. City of Los Angeles Relinquishment Letter dated 9/20/2022
4. Project Summary
5. Preliminary Development Plans dated 5/5/2022
6. Preliminary TDM and Mobility Plan received 5/20/2022
7. CEQA Technical Studies dated January 2022
8. Trip Generation Analysis and Transportation Assessment Criteria dated 6/8/2021

MOTION:

That the Planning Commission:

Adopt a Class 32 CEQA Categorical Exemption, Approve a Site Plan Review and Administrative Use Permit for a four-story, 11,100 sq. ft. Office Development, subject to the Conditions of Approval per the proposed Planning Commission Resolution.