CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA
Community Development
Planning

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DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
RECORD OF DECISION

Meeting Date November 9, 2023

DRB Case No. PDR-001980-2023

Address 5426 San Fernando Rd. & 753 West California Ave.

Applicant Griffith Studio Owner, LCC

Project Summary:
To construct approximately 406,318 square feet of building area consists of three commercial buildings (Building 1 to 3) that contain 10 production soundstage studios, three flex spaces, production offices, commissary spaces, and various support spaces and an above-grade six-story parking structure (Building 4) on an approximately 424,453 square foot (9.74 acres) site, located in the IMU zone (Industrial/Commercial Mixed Use). The project provides a total of 533 parking spaces within the proposed parking structure and surface parking lots. The project site is currently occupied with one-story warehouse and commercial buildings (built between 1947 and 1989), totaling approximately 126,450 square feet which are proposed to be demolished.

Building 1 (214,885 S.F.) will be located toward the west side of the site with primary frontage on San Fernando Road. The building will be a six-story main office with supporting spaces and outdoor decks and terraces. Building 2 (97,905 S.F.) will be one-story production stages to accommodate five soundstages and will be located toward the north side, facing Milford Street. Building 3 (93,528 S.F.) will contain five production soundstages and will be located at the south of Building 2, behind Building 1. Building 4 will be a six-level above-grade parking structure, which will be located at the northwest corner of the project site, facing San Fernando Road and Milford Street. The proposed parking structure will provide 479 parking spaces. The project also provides 54 surface parking spaces including four disabled parking spaces and 12 loading spaces. The project meets parking requirements for the proposed development and involves a standards variance, setback variance, and a parking exception request as detailed below in the Active/Pending Permits and Approvals section.

Environmental:

Board Member	Motion	Second	Yes	No	Absent	Abstain
Lockareff					X	
Kaskanian		X	X			
Simonian	X		X			
Tchaghayan			X			
Welch				X		
Totals			**3**	**1**	**1**	
DRB Decision	Certify Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (by Resolution) and adopt MMRP					

Design Review:

Board Member	Motion	Second	Yes	No	Absent	Abstain
Lockareff					X	
Kaskanian	X		X			
Simonian		X	X			
Tchaghayan			X			
Welch				X		
Totals			**3**	**1**	**1**	
DRB Decision	Approved with conditions					

Conditions

1. Add variety of colors to the proposed materials to create visual interest and variety to the design of Building 1.

Determination of Compatibility: Site Planning

The project's **site planning** is appropriate to the site and its surroundings for the following reasons:

- The project's site planning is appropriate to the site and its primarily industrial, commercial, and residential neighboring properties and meets the City's Design Guidelines for the Suburban Corridor projects as the proposed buildings are located close to the streets with on-site surface parking areas located behind the buildings.

- The proposed development provides 17’-0” setback along San Fernando Road in order to accommodate the existing high voltage power poles and power lines along the street and provides significant setbacks from the adjacent residential neighborhood on the east and southeast side of the site. The development distances 48’-9” from the east interior property line and 62’-6” from the south property line. This helps the development to be compatible with the surrounding residential buildings, considering shade/shadow effects, light, air and ventilation, scenic vistas, and the intensity of development.
- New vehicular access to the site will be provided from two secured gates from Milford Street (north side of the site) and one gate from California Avenue (south side of the site), away from street intersections to minimize conflict with traffic. The project also provides a pedestrian entry to Building 1 (office building) with access through a U shaped rideshare entry and exit off San Fernando Road (west side of the site). All proposed vehicular gates allow vehicular circulation to the proposed parking structure and on-site surface parking lots. The westerly gate on Milford Street will provide direct access to the parking structure through a driveway located at the east side of the parking structure. As encouraged by the Design Guidelines, the project’s on-site parking areas are either completely screened from view by the buildings or distanced significantly from San Fernando Road and Milford Street.
- The proposed development will not alter the existing sidewalks and street trees along three street frontages significantly. New street trees will be planted along Milford Street and San Fernando Road to the satisfaction of the Public Works Department/Urban Forestry.
- The project’s landscaping is complementary to the building design and includes drought tolerant plants and trees which are proposed throughout the parking lots and along the site perimeter, adjacent to the residential zones. To enhance pedestrian experience, the project is also proposing generous landscaped areas along San Fernando Road and at the base of the building (parking structure) along Milford Street. Parking Exception Case No. PPPEX2201704 addresses the project’s deficiency in the required interior landscaping for the parking lots, trees dispersal requirements throughout the parking lots, and the elimination of the minimum required five-foot landscaped setback on the east side of the parking structure.
- The project proposes a six-level parking structure at the corner of the site. It also provides a landscaped open space with seating area for the public use at the northwest corner of the building (corner of San Fernando Road and Milford). However, it does not provide the code required entrance to the building from the corner cutoff. Variance Case No. PVAR2201935 addresses the details and justifications for the variance request.
- New CMU walls with plaster finish and the overall height of eight feet are proposed along the easterly and southerly property lines, adjacent to the residential neighborhood. Landscaping is proposed along the walls to soften the appearance of the walls and to minimize visual impact. The project is proposing iron fences and gates at the entry area

of Building 1, along San Fernando Road. Series of planters and landscaping along the fence and gates are complementary to the design and help minimize the visual impact.

- The rooftop mechanical equipment for all buildings will be appropriately screened from view.
- The trash collection areas and required transformer enclosures are appropriately sited on the site.

The project's **massing and scale** are appropriate to the site and its surroundings for the following reasons:

- The mass and scale of the proposed project are appropriate and relate to the existing context and provide effective transitions within the existing industrial, commercial, and multi-story residential buildings adjacent to the project site because the taller portion of the proposed development is located away from the existing one- to three-story residential buildings. The proposed development is larger in size (406,318 SF) than existing neighboring structures and is designed as a series of separate buildings with variations in building heights, stepbacks, materials, and colors as encouraged by the City's Design Guidelines. The project is proposing four detached buildings (Building 1 to 4). Building 1 which is a six-story production office with supporting spaces, is the tallest building and faces San Fernando Road and represents appropriate proportions with multiple forms. The proposed landscape along the lower levels of the building, stepbacks, and the use of glass surfaces break up the massing in an effective way and provide human scale forms as encouraged by the Design Guidelines. The proposed terraces on the upper floors of Building 1 provide visual interest and also help break up the building's massing. Building 4 is a six-level above-grade parking structure and will be located at the northwest corner of the site, to the north side of Building 1. The proposed landscape planters at the base of the parking structure will help reduce the building's sense of mass.
- Building 1 with the overall height of 89'-6" and Building 4 (parking structure) with the overall height of 67'-5" exceed the height limit of 50 feet. Building 2 and 3 will have an overall height of 50 feet. While the proposed buildings are larger than the existing buildings, the development will add to the visual interest and architectural elements that are appropriate and complement the existing commercial and industrial buildings along San Fernando Road. Variance Case No. PVAR2201935 addresses the exceeded height limit.
- Building 2 and Building 3 with the overall height of 50 feet are largely unarticulated and designed to accommodate soundstage production spaces and consequently do not propose broken forms so they can meet the operational needs and industry standards of soundstage production facilities. Building 3 will be partially visible from the street (San Fernando Road) and Building 2 faces Milford Street (on the north side of the site). The proposed landscape and trees on the existing parkway along Milford frontage help soften the building edge along the street and help the transition of the proposed scale with the surrounding context.

- The building's primary pedestrian entrance is well integrated and will be accessed from San Fernando Road (west side of the site) through a U-shaped driveway, designed for pick-up and drop-off of the employees and users of the campus.

Determination of Compatibility: Design and Detailing

The project's **design and detailing** are appropriate, as modified by conditions, to the site and its surroundings for the following reasons:

- The proposed architectural style and details are appropriate to the site and its surroundings. Overall, the design and detailing reinforce the proposed Modern architectural style and enhance the edge of the suburban corridor along San Fernando Road. For Building 1 (office building), the project proposes smooth finish EIFS in two colors, partial decorative metal cladding, metal railings and gates, metal canopies, glass surfaces, and aluminum doors and windows. A condition of approval is added to add a variety of colors to the proposed materials to create visual interest and variety to the design of Building 1.
- For Building 2 and 3 (soundstages), the project proposes painted CMU walls at the building base and tilt-up concrete panels above. For Building 4 (parking structure), the concrete walls are partially clad with a metal panel cladding system to screen and soften the walls.
- The location of the primary entryway to the project's office building along San Fernando Road is recessed to create visual interest that provides a sense of arrival to the structure. The entryway is marked with a change in materials and colors to indicate the entry point at the passenger pick-up and drop-off area.
- To enhance the pedestrian experience, the project is proposing top cast concrete paving material for the visitors' driveway, facing San Fernando Road. The project proposes asphalt and un-permeable surface material for the internal parking lots, compatible for use by heavy vehicles and trucks.
- The project's design indicates locations for accessory wall signs, directional signs, and accessory ground signs. The signs are appropriately scaled for the size of the buildings.
- The development does not propose any exterior light fixtures on the walls of Building 1 and the light fixtures for the exterior trellis are proposed to be mounted underside. Building 2 and 3 will have exterior light fixtures mounted on the walls except for the walls that are facing the public right of way.
- The project is subject to Urban Art requirement and is required to include on-site public art, equal to 2% of project value, subject to review by the design review authority, following review and recommendation by the Arts and Culture Commission or any other body designated by the City Council. As an alternative to the urban art plan requirements, the applicant may pay an amount equivalent to one (1) percent of the value of the project, as determined by the building official, into the urban art fund. The applicant has indicated an intention to pay the in-lieu fee.

- The windows and doors are compatible with the proposed architectural style and the overall design. The windows for Building 1 will be fixed, aluminum with deep trim (EIFS) around windows to provide depth and shadow. The soundstages (Building 2 and 3) do not feature any windows.
- The proposed buildings feature flat roofs with roof parapets, which are appropriate to the context and reinforce the proposed architectural design concept.

DRB Staff Member Aileen Babakhani, Planner

Notes:
Contact the case planner for an appointment for a DRB stamp. DRB stamps will no longer be stamped over the counter without an appointment.

The Design Review Board approves the design of project only. Approval of a project by the Design Review Board does not constitute an approval of compliance with the Zoning Code and/or Building Code requirements.

If an appeal is not filed within the **15-day appeal** period of the Design Review Board decision, plans may be approved for Building Division plan check. Prior to Building Division plan check submittal, Design Review Board approved plans must be stamped approved by the Design Review staff.

Any changes to the approved plans may constitute returning to the Design Review Board for approval. Prior to Building Division plan check submittal, all changes in substantial conformance with approved plans by the Design Review Board must be on file with the Planning Division.