

M E M O R A N D U M

CITY PLANNING DIVISION

**PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
CITY OF SANTA MONICA**

DATE: March 13, 2017

TO: The Honorable Landmarks Commission

FROM: Planning Staff

SUBJECT: Certificate of Appropriateness 16ENT-0008, 1601-1603 Ocean Front Walk

Consideration of a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval of structural testing and examination work; seismic reinforcement; rehabilitation of the building's exterior including repair of original brickwork and windows; and the construction of a new ground-floor storefront system, canopy, awnings, outdoor patio, mechanical screening, sign plans, and the installation of other appurtenant site improvements to accommodate a new "Starbucks" retail tenant within a designated City Landmark.

APPLICANT: aARts Architects

PROPERTY OWNER: Russell No. 8 Santa Monica Properties, LLC

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In order to accommodate a new retail "Starbucks" tenant, the applicant is proposing to make substantial upgrades and improvements to this newly designated City Landmark. The scope of work associated with the Certificate of Appropriateness includes additional testing and examination of existing conditions, rehabilitation and restoration activities that will return historic materials that have long been covered up, the construction of a new storefront system and other contemporary building features, and the installation of new business identification signage and other appurtenant site features.

The two-story brick building located at the base of the Santa Monica Pier, was constructed in 1921. The building, along with two other adjacent buildings, was designated a City Landmark on October 10, 2016 for exemplifying elements of the cultural, social and economic history of the City as illustrated by its role as a commercial property adjacent to the Santa Monica Pier. The designation identified the following elements as its historic character-defining features:

- Setting – directly across from the Pier, along Ocean Front Walk, oriented towards the west

- Two story height
- Brick cladding and parapet
- Flat roof
- Original windows and fenestration pattern on second floor, north and west elevations

The proposed tenant improvement was guided by the input of the Commission provided during a conceptual review of schematic plans for the buildings located at 1601-1613 Ocean Front Walk, including the subject property at 1601-1603 Ocean Front Walk, held on November 14, 2016. Based on the plans presented, the Commission expressed its overall concern about the loss of the funky, playful and whimsical, conditions that are currently expressed on the Landmark buildings (and are not character-defining features). Commissioners suggested retaining the style, varying vertical elements and introducing color into the project to enliven the buildings, and cautioned against a generic design for the proposed Starbucks. Commissioners expressed excitement about exposing the original brickwork and restoring the windows, but lamented the loss of the eclectic color palette. Commissioners expressed interest in this collection of buildings will more visually relate to the Pier.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The project is categorically exempt from the provisions of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15331, Class 31 of the State Implementation Guidelines in that the project consists of a façade remodel, which will be done in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings (1995), Weeks and Grimmer.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of this hearing was provided as required by Section 9.56.170(c) of the Landmarks Ordinance, with notice sent to all owners and occupants within a 300-foot radius and a newspaper notice published in the Santa Monica Daily Press at least 10 days prior to the hearing (Attachment A).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Certificate of Appropriateness includes a range of activities that are necessary to allow a new retail Starbucks tenant to establish itself with the Landmark building.

- Repair - The project includes rehabilitation and restoration work to repair any damage and repoint the grouting where necessary. The project scope was developed as a result of important exploratory analysis of the building's existing conditions. This analysis required the removal of the existing, non-original metal siding materials, exposing the original brickwork and windows located on the upper floor. The existing windows will be also repaired, with replacement only occurring where deterioration warrants this treatment. A recently uncovered "ghost" sign from a previous tenant (Del's Café) will be retained.

- Seismic Reinforcement - The building will be seismically reinforced with new and/or replacement steel columns and beams. Necessary structural modifications are expected to be located on the interior of the building within the depths of the walls and should not affect any of the exterior character-defining features. All existing seismic anchor plates and bolts will remain and be cleaned.
- Exterior Tenant Improvement - A new contemporary storefront system will be installed that consists of clear glazing and aluminum frames utilizing the existing openings. The ground floor level has been historically altered to accommodate a variety retail uses over time. On the north elevation, opaque glass will be utilized in one of the openings in response to interior conditions that do not warrant transparency. Similarly, on the west elevation, brake metal panels will be used to hide any structural members that might otherwise be exposed. A decorative metal canopy, wavy in appearance and painted a bright green color, will be installed along almost the entire Ocean Front Walk elevation. As the canopy wraps the corner onto the north building elevation, its profile straightens and continues to the end of the new window. Above the second floor windows on the north and west elevations, new canvas awnings, bright purple in color and supported by metal brackets, will be installed. The canopies will be attached to the above-described brake metal, and will not impact any original material.
- Outdoor Seating - A new outdoor seating area, containing mobile tables, seating and shade umbrellas, is proposed along Ocean Front Walk. This area will be defined by an open-style metal rail with a colorful resin top rail and in-fill pattern that complements the other color choices. No special treatment to the patio surface is planned at this time. The outdoor area was not identified in the Landmark Designation.
- Mechanical Equipment - Any new mechanical equipment will be installed in the rear of the property, on the ground at the northeast corner of the property. This equipment will be screened with a stainless steel wire frame low wall. The rear yard area, which is currently secured with a chain-link fence, will be protected by a six-foot high decorative wrought iron fence, in place of the existing fencing. This will not impact any character-defining feature.
- Proposed Mural - The parapet at the top of the north and west elevations currently consists of split-face brick. In order to add some visual interest to this feature, the applicant is proposing to paint a decorative mural at the top corner of the building, wrapping onto both elevations, with colors and imagery that references the building's seaside location and its adjacency to the Santa Monica Pier and Aquarium. The mural adds that sense of whimsy suggested by the Commission, and is a reversible feature.

Sign Plans - In order to provide appropriate identification for the Starbucks, the applicant is proposing approximately 32 square feet of new business signs. This amount is well

below the maximum 52 square feet as permitted by the Sign Code. Two types of business identification signs have been proposed:

- Individual, acrylic-faced channel lettering (totaling 28.60 square feet in sum total), consisting of 16" high text, pin-mounted to a new metal canopy, located on the Ocean Front Walk elevation. Each of the letter will be internally illuminated; and,
- An approximately three square-foot circular hanging medallion sign, with an acrylic face, internally illuminated. The will be installed on the underside of the new metal canopy at the proposed entry to the store.

Staff has determined that the mural proposed along the roof parapet does not qualify as business identification signage.

Analysis

The applicant has engaged the services of a masonry expert to analyze the existing condition of the original brickwork, which has been masked under metal cladding for a number of year. In its report, which is included as an attachment, the consultant discovered three different makes of brick currently exist and noted mortar and grout deterioration throughout. The report recommend repairs and treatment strategies to ensure that the brickwork will be able to withstand its proposed exposure.

All of the work associated with this Certificate of Appropriateness is not expected to have any negative effects on the building's historic integrity. In fact, the building's overall integrity will be strengthened as a result of the proposal to restore the original brickwork and windows, which have been masked for number of years under non-historic materials. The new building elements that are proposed will complement the building's character and will add playful and whimsical visual touches that are reflective of the festive atmosphere created by the Santa Monica Pier. The proposed improvements to the rear of the property will not have an impact on integrity and will enhance the visual appeal and functionality of the site. Staff appreciates the efforts to locate any mechanical equipment off of the rooftop, given how visually prominent it is to the public, due to the building's location adjacent to the Santa Monica Pier access bridge. The mural proposed along the rooftop parapet also becomes more prominent given these unusual circumstances.

As with all requests that may impact a designated City Landmark, the proposed work must be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Properties. The proposed work includes Rehabilitation as the primary treatment associated with the proposed project.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards define rehabilitation as "[t]he act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values".

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation state the following:

- **Standard 1.** A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
- **Standard 2.** The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
- **Standard 3.** Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
- **Standard 4.** Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
- **Standard 5.** Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
- **Standard 6.** Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
- **Standard 7.** Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
- **Standard 8.** Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
- **Standard 9.** New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
- **Standard 10.** New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The proposal conforms with Standard 1 as the building's façade and elevations would be preserved and rehabilitated, with minimal alterations limited to the secondary elevations that will not impact character-defining features. The project will restore features and materials that characterize the property, the brickwork and second floor windows as recommended by Standards 2 and 5. The metal canopy, canvas awnings and signs, are contemporary in materiality and design and will not create a false sense of historicism as described in Standard 3. In accordance with Standard 7, the building's distinct brickwork will be repaired and cleaned utilizing gentle means. In general, the proposed alterations are minimal and will not impact any of the historic character-defining features or negatively impact overall integrity of the resource. Therefore, the project appears to comply with the Secretary of the Interior Standards.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission approve Certificate of Appropriateness 17ENT-0008 in accordance with the following findings, as required by SMMC Section 9.56.140(c):

The applicant is proposing substantial upgrades and improvements to accommodate a new retail tenant, including various rehabilitation/repair activities affecting the building's exterior and site characteristics. The project retains

identified character-defining features and materials that characterize the property. The new building elements that are proposed will complement the building's character and will add playful and whimsical visual touches that are reflective of the festive atmosphere created by the Santa Monica Pier. The proposed improvements to the rear of the property will not have an impact on integrity and will enhance the visual appeal and functionality of the site. The new storefront system, canopy and awnings are contemporary in materiality and design and will not create a false sense of historicism. The proposed construction will not negatively impact any of the character-defining features of the Landmark building. All work is proposed to be completed in a sensitive and appropriate manner in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

CONDITIONS

1. This approval is for the plans dated February 22, 2017, which are on file in the City Planning Division. Significant changes to the project design that are within the Commission's purview shall require review and approval by the Landmarks Commission. Minor changes may be approved administratively pursuant to all applicable guidelines and shall be subject to staff's approval and consistent with the findings of fact contained herein.
2. The applicant shall implement the repair and treatment recommendations for the existing masonry and brickwork as described in the reports prepared by Griswold Conservation Associates, LLC, dated November 4, 2016, and the report prepared by Tudor Stone & Brickwork, dated February 13, 2017.
3. This Certificate of Appropriateness shall be in full force and effect from and after the date of the rendering of the decision by the Commission. Pursuant to Landmarks Ordinance Section 9.56.170(h), this approval shall expire within 18 months if the authorized work is not commenced. Should the applicant be unable to comply with this restriction, an extension may be granted pursuant to Section 9.56.250 for an additional 180 days maximum. The applicant must request such an extension prior to expiration of this permit. After that time, the applicant will be required to return to the Commission for approval. In addition, this Certificate of Appropriateness shall expire if the authorized work is suspended for a 180-day period after being commenced.
4. This decision may be appealed by properly filing with the Director of Planning and Community Development a Notice of Appeal on a form furnished by the Planning and Community Department. Such notice shall be filed within a ten (10) day time period commencing from the date of the determination.
5. All required Planning and Building Permit approvals shall be obtained.

Attachments:

- A. Public Notice
- B. Project Plans
- C. Masonry Inspection Report
- D. Original Finishes Report
- E. Property Owner's Historic Consultant Report