



# Architectural Review Board Report

Architectural Review Board Meeting: August 29, 2011

Agenda Item: 7.3

To: Architectural Review Board  
From: Steve Traeger, Principal Urban Designer  
Laura Beck, ARB Liaison  
Subject: ARB 11-174 to approve the building design, colors and materials for the overlook viewing structures for Palisades Garden Walk park.  
Address: 1700 Main Street  
Applicant: City of Santa Monica

## Recommended Action

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board approve ARB application 11-174 based upon the findings and subject to the conditions contained within this report.

## Executive Summary

On May 11, 2011 and July 18, 2011, the Board approved the design, colors and materials for the structures within the proposed park, including the restroom facility, the screen walls, the maintenance shed, and the pedestrian bridge, but requested that the design of the overlook structures be further refined and return to the Board for approval. The structures have been redesigned as well as the some of the adjacent landscaping and site conditions. Additionally, the applicant has submitted supplemental drawings and details to facilitate the Board's review. Staff supports this project and believes that the applicant has responded to the Board's concerns. The structures are thought to complement the park design and other developments proposed for the Palisades Garden Walk park. Therefore, staff recommends approval with conditions as contained within this report.

## Background

On May 11, 2011, the Board reviewed the design, colors and materials for the structures within the proposed park, including the restroom facility, the screen walls, the maintenance shed, the overlook structures, and the pedestrian bridge. The Board approved the project with the condition that the design of the pedestrian bridge and overlook structures be further refined and that the maintenance shed be reconsidered. On July 18, 2011, the Board approved the revised design of the pedestrian bridge and maintenance shed, but requested that the design of the overlook structures be further refined and return to the Board for approval.

## Analysis

When the Board reviewed the previous design of the overlook structures at its July 18, 2011 meeting, it complemented the applicant on the use of wood decking and the mesh handrails with a wood top rail and noted that the use of these materials created a connection with the pedestrian bridge. However, the Board expressed a strong concern

that the Pier Overlook and Ocean Overlook structures were not well integrated into the site. Additionally, the siting of the overlook structures atop a 16.5 foot retaining wall without a cantilever created an uninviting barrier for pedestrians and passing vehicles on Ocean Avenue. Additionally, the Board felt that the cantilever of the earlier design was an important feature contributing to the identity of the overlooks.

#### Building Design/Architectural Concept

The applicant has redesigned the Pier Overlook and Ocean Overlook structures and has revised the decking material of the Second Street Overlook. As presented at the July 18, 2011 meeting, the overlooks were designed to mark the gateway on the frontage of the park while abstractly framing the people in the park, to provide an opportunity for visitors inside the park to have an elevated view outwards, including elevated views of the ocean in two specific locations, and to provide shade and shadows in an organic form and express of the topography of the site.

The designs of the structures have been refined to better integrate with the site. Additionally, the retaining walls below the two structures along Ocean Avenue (Pier and Ocean overlooks) have been redesigned and now feature additional landscaping that softens the walls upon which the structures sit. The cantilever feature of the structures has been reinstated and the height above the Ocean Avenue sidewalk has been lowered to provide a more direct connection to Ocean Avenue. Stainless steel dot lights are still proposed to be imbedded throughout the deck of the structures to provide a unique illumination. Staff feels that the applicant has responded to the Board's concerns and supports the design as submitted. Specifically, the following revisions have improved the proposed project:

#### Pier Overlook -

- Steel rib structure more elliptical
- Larger, more generous opening at viewpoint/edge of structure (Expanded from 7'-8" x 14'-6" to 11'-6" x 16'-0")
- Steel ribs extend below the deck of the structure to better integrate with the retaining wall
- Size of steel ribs increased slightly
- Height of deck above Ocean Avenue sidewalk lowered 2'-0"
- Viewing platform cantilevers; retaining wall terraced to provide landscape below overlook structure
- Wood decking revised so that it terminates at the edge of the steel rib structure
- Teak specified as material for decking

#### Ocean Overlook -

- Shape of steel ribbed structure changed
- Larger, more generous opening at viewpoint/edge of structure (Expanded from 6'-5" x 11'-11" to 11'-6" x 12'-0")
- Steel ribs extend below the deck of the structure to better integrate with the retaining wall
- Height of deck above Ocean Avenue sidewalk lowered 1'-4"

- Viewing platform cantilevers; retaining wall terraced to provide landscape below overlook structure
- Wood decking revised so that it terminates at the edge of the steel rib structure
- Teak specified as material for decking

Second Street Overlook -

- 6" Teak decking proposed (in lieu of 6" Trex decking)

The applicant has also provided the following additional exhibits and/or details to facilitate the Board's review:

Project Plans -

- Ocean Avenue Elevation keyed to Site Plan provided
- Site Plan key added to Ocean Avenue Elevation (Overlooks + Bridge Elevation)
- Additional Section Drawings with site context provided for all 3 Overlooks
- Connection details (Steel rib to Wall) provided
- Cantilever construction detail provided
- Site Photograph depicting location of Second Street Overlook provided

Conclusion

Staff feels that the applicant has addressed the Board's concerns and supports this project. Staff believes the overlook structures are well integrated with other developments proposed for the Palisades Garden Walk park and recommends approval.

Building Design

DESIGN ELEMENTS	PROPOSED EXTERIOR MATERIAL, FINISH AND COLOR
Overlook Structures	4' x 1" vertical painted steel ribs (light grey) 3" x 1" horizontal painted steel ribs (light grey) FSC Certified Teak Wood In-grade stainless steel dot lighting (ChromaPoint Luminaire)
Handrail	FSC Certified Teak wood X-Tend mesh Tensile Fabric, stainless steel

Pedestrian Orientation and Neighborhood Compatibility

The proposed design concept and material palate is consistent with the overall Palisades Garden Walk park design. The structures are designed to enhance the pedestrian experience within the park and cater to park visitors.

Impact on Historic Resources

The subject property is not listed on the City's Historic Resources Inventory.

**CEQA Status**

The project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15061 (b)(3) in that it can be seen with certainty that the proposed project does not have the potential for causing a significant effect on the

environment in that the project involves the review of design-related issues associated with the proposed structure(s) in terms of general architectural design, proposed materials, colors, mechanical screening and/or landscape plans. Additionally, the EIR for the Civic Center Specific Plan, including Palisades Garden Walk, was certified June 28, 2005.

### **Code Compliance**

This application has been preliminarily reviewed for compliance with the base district's development standards and the Civic Center Specific Plan which address aspects of the plan that could result in significant changes to the project's design. A complete code-compliance review will not occur until the application is submitted for plan check. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the plans comply fully with all applicable provisions of the Municipal Code. The applicant has been notified of any significant non-compliant aspects of their plans, and a condition has been added requiring full compliance with all applicable regulations prior to the issuance of a building permit. Any significant changes to the design subsequent to any ARB approval will require Board approval.

### **FINDINGS:**

- A. The plan for the proposed building or structure is expressive of good taste, good design, and in general contributes to the image of Santa Monica as a place of beauty, creativity and individuality in that the structures are designed to function within the park and are designed as fully-integrated components of the Palisades Garden Walk park. Specifically, the steel ribbed overlook structures are unique and provide visual interest to pedestrians within the park and to pedestrians and motorists along Ocean Avenue.
- B. The proposed buildings or structures are not of inferior quality such as to cause the nature of the local neighborhood or environment to materially depreciate in appearance and value in that high quality material as detailed in the application submittal and as presented to the Architectural Review Board will be used.
- C. The proposed design of the buildings or structures are compatible with developments on land in the general area in that proposed colors, textures and finishes of the structures are compatible with the overall concept and design of the proposed Palisades Garden Walk park.
- D. The proposed development conforms to the effective guidelines and standards adopted pursuant to Chapter 9.32 – *Architectural Review Board*, and all other applicable ordinances insofar as the location and appearance of the buildings and structures are involved. Specifically, the location and appearance of the buildings and structures comply with required findings set forth in Chapter 9.32, as documented by the Architectural Review Board, and as conditioned, the plans will fully comply with all applicable regulations prior to the issuance of a building permit.

**CONDITIONS:**

1. This approval shall expire when the administrative or discretionary entitlements previously granted by an associated approval have lapsed. If no such permit has been issued, this approval shall expire eighteen months from its effective date, unless appealed or otherwise implemented pursuant to applicable municipal regulations.
2. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall demonstrate that the plans comply with all applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance. Significant changes to a project's design shall require review and approval of the Architectural Review Board. Minor changes may be approved administratively pursuant to all applicable guidelines.

The Architectural Review Board's approval, conditions of approval, or denial of this application may be appealed to the Planning Commission if the appeal is filed with the Zoning Administrator within ten consecutive days following the date of the Architectural Review Board's determination in the manner provided in Chapter 9.32, Section 9.32.160.

Prepared by: Steve Traeger, Principal Urban Designer  
Laura Beck, ARB Liaison

**Attachments**

- A. Applicant's Submittal Material
- B. Rendering of Previous Design