

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**TO:** Planning Commission

**THROUGH:** Richard Thompson, Director of Community Development

**FROM:** Daniel A. Moreno, Associate Planner

**DATE:** April 23 2008

**SUBJECT: Consideration of the Southerly Building Façade of an Approved Use Permit for a Proposed Rite Aid Retail Store Located at 1100 Manhattan Beach Boulevard**

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review the proposed redesign of the southerly façade and **APPROVE** the proposal as presented.

**BACKGROUND**

At the April 9, 2008 Planning Commission meeting, the Commission discussed and took testimony from staff, the public and the applicant regarding the redesign of the southerly wall to reduce appearance of the building mass as recommended by City Council. At this meeting, after discussing the proposed changes, the Commission felt that the changes had not gone far enough to reduce the building mass and continued the hearing to tonight's meeting in order that the applicant redesign some of the architectural elements to be more in keeping with the design of the rest of the building and to provide additional landscaping.

At tonight's meeting, the applicant will provide color renderings which show a comparison of the previously presented building design and the revised changes to the southerly building façade.

Staff is in support of the proposed redesign together with the previous landscape plan proposed at the April 9, 2008 Planning Commission meeting in as much as the other landscape plan is more conducive for a commercial development.

**Attachments:**

- Exhibit A: Planning Commission Minutes, dated 4/9/08
- Exhibit B: Color Renderings N/A
- Exhibit C: Applicants Narrative of proposed Changes
- Exhibit D: Site Plan N/A
- Exhibit E: Landscape Plan N/A

**DRAFT**

1  
2  
3 **PUBLIC HEARINGS**  
4

5 **08/040901 Consideration of the Southerly Building Façade of an Approved Use Permit**  
6 **for a Proposed Rite Aid Store Located at 1100 Manhattan Beach Blvd.**  
7

8 Associate Planner Moreno summarized the staff report. He indicated that the Commission  
9 previously considered the application for the Rite Aid store and had denied it because of concerns  
10 with the building height, and the applicant filed an appeal of the Commission's decision to the City  
11 Council. He commented that the Council approved the appeal with the condition that the applicant  
12 redesign the façade of the southerly wall to reduce the appearance of building mass subject to  
13 review by the Commission. He indicated that the applicant has provided a redesign of the westerly  
14 and southerly elevations. He said that a planter has been included in front of the structure which  
15 provides additional articulation of the building. He commented that the applicant has made an  
16 effort to include additional landscaping with the redesign. He described the redesign of the  
17 proposal.  
18

19 Associate Planner Moreno commented that a pedestrian walkway has been eliminated to allow for a  
20 planter on the south portion of the building.  
21

22 Chairman Lesser indicated that his understanding was that the main purpose of positioning the  
23 building as proposed was because of the Sepulveda Corridor Guidelines which call for pedestrian  
24 access from Sepulveda Boulevard.  
25

26 Associate Planner Moreno said that a pedestrian walkway was previously proposed on the side of  
27 the structure but did not provide access to the entry area. He said that there is a pedestrian access  
28 area on the southeast corner of the property.  
29

30 Commissioner Bohner commented that his understanding is that the charge of the City Council is  
31 for the Commissioners to only consider whether or not there has been sufficient articulation and  
32 landscaping incorporated on the south side to break up the appearance of bulk, and issues such as  
33 the height of the structure and regarding the Sepulveda Corridor Guidelines are not under  
34 consideration.  
35

36 Director Thompson indicated that the City Council supported the project but directed that the  
37 applicant return to the Planning Commission with a redesign of the south elevation for further  
38 review.  
39

40 Commissioner Seville-Jones commented that the impact to the Sepulveda Boulevard Guidelines  
41 because of the elimination of a sidewalk is an issue that is now before the Commission as a result



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1 of the new proposal and was not before the City Council. She stated that she challenges whether  
2 the Commission should take into consideration the Sepulveda Boulevard Guidelines with respect to  
3 the new changes.

4  
5 Director Thompson commented that staff would agree that the guidelines should be taken into  
6 consideration if the subject sidewalk was an integral part of the plan and provided pedestrian access  
7 from Sepulveda Boulevard to the front entry of the store, which is not the case.

8  
9 In response to a question from Commissioner Bohner, Director Thompson commented that the City  
10 Council did approve the height of the structure and the silhouette of the building but felt that more  
11 could be done to break up the massing on the south elevation particularly when viewed from  
12 Sepulveda Boulevard. He indicated that staff does not feel more could be done to break up the  
13 mass than is proposed without completely redesigning the structure.

14  
15 Commissioner Seville-Jones indicated that she would like further information from the architect on  
16 their thought process of using height, framing, paint, and landscaping in order to reduce bulk.

17  
18 Commissioner Fasola indicated that he does not have a concern with the bulk of the proposed  
19 structure. He commented, however, that since it is a single tenant building, there are no entrances  
20 off of Sepulveda Boulevard that would be pedestrian oriented. He stated that the structure basically  
21 would appear as a large structure with ornamentation along the sides. He commented that the  
22 design includes a Styrofoam cornice, imitation stone, false windows, large overhangs, and concrete  
23 roof tiles. He said that the structure and design do not seem appropriate for the site. He stated that  
24 he would like for the design to be more uniform around the entire structure. He said that the design  
25 features applied to the structure to him does not address the issue of mass and bulk.

26  
27 Commissioner Powell requested that the gable in the center of the west elevation be painted a  
28 separate color from the building as originally proposed rather than to match the building as  
29 proposed with the redesign.

30  
31 **John Kanig**, representing the applicant, said that he is proud of the redesign. He indicated that they  
32 made changes in response to the comments of the Commission. He commented that the City  
33 Council supported the design of the north, west, and east elevations but had a concern regarding the  
34 southern elevation. He indicated that they agreed that the southerly elevation fell short of the  
35 design of the rest of the structure. He commented that the redesign of the southerly elevation  
36 results in it being consistent with the other elevations. He indicated that the windows on the  
37 southerly elevation are actually windows and will allow light into the pharmacy area. He pointed  
38 out that there are two landscaped areas along the southerly wall and along 11<sup>th</sup> Street which are not  
39 depicted on the drawings.

40  
41 **Bob Superneau**, the project architect, described the proposed redesign. He commented that they

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1 are limited as to the types of trees along the side of the building because of the size of the planter.  
2 He said they selected palm trees because they felt they would be the most likely to successfully  
3 grown in the planter and would break up the massing.  
4

5 Commissioner Fasola indicated that he has a concern that there is a lack of coherence of the entire  
6 structure. He indicated that he does not feel the proposed design meets the standard for a structure  
7 that will be located on the corner for many years. He said that he feels the gable placed on the wall  
8 as proposed will look fake. He indicated that the redesign of the south elevation is more coherent  
9 with the rest of the building; however, he is concerned with the design from all of the elevations  
10 which appears simply to be applied ornamentation to the structure.  
11

12 In response to a question from Commissioner Seville-Jones, **Mr. Superneau** indicated that they are  
13 limited in the type of tree that can be used next to the building because of the size of the planter. He  
14 indicated that they can look at other options for the types of trees that can be used. He commented  
15 that there will also be landscaping along the westerly elevation along Sepulveda Boulevard.  
16

17 Commissioner Bohner commented that the only methods for reducing the bulk appear to be with  
18 landscaping and providing articulation on the front of the building. He asked if there were any other  
19 methods of reducing bulk without having to redesign the entire structure.  
20

21 **Mr. Superneau** said that they felt they did everything possible with the existing proposal to break  
22 up the mass without redesigning the building. He said that they did not have much room to expand  
23 any of the design elements further without impacting the parking. He indicated that they would be  
24 happy to eliminate any of the design elements if it is the desire of the Commission.  
25

26 Commissioner Powell commented that he would like for additional landscaping to have been  
27 included instead of some of the concrete. He said that he has a concern that the type of trees that  
28 are depicted in the drawings may actually grow taller than the roof line of the structure with only  
29 the trunk in front of the building which would not break up the bulk. He asked if there is any  
30 articulation that can be provided between the trees.  
31

32 **Mr. Superneau** commented that they can work with their landscape architect to see if there are  
33 other types of trees that would be full grown at the appropriate height in relation to the building. He  
34 indicated that they felt that the palm trees which are depicted in the drawings would be the most  
35 appropriate for the planter.  
36

37 **Mr. Kanig** indicated that said that they would be willing to discuss the landscaping further with the  
38 appropriate representative of the City. He said that he hopes that they can proceed with the overall  
39 project.  
40

41 **Gerry O'Connor**, a resident of the 500 block of Harkness Street, said that he previously expressed

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1 his opinion when the project was originally proposed that he felt it is too large for the site. He  
2 indicated that he feels the Commission did an extremely thorough effort in originally considering  
3 the project. He said that the applicant then appealed the decision of the Commission and came back  
4 from the City Council with approval that included a charge to the Commission. He indicated that  
5 the criteria to judge whether the appearance of bulk has sufficiently been reduced is not clear. He  
6 commented that although the Commission previously denied the entire project, they are now asked  
7 to be an art jury on whether they feel the design is sufficiently improved. He stated that the fact that  
8 the Commission was not given any information before the hearing regarding the new proposal is  
9 outside of the normal process. He indicated that no new information was provided prior to the  
10 hearing, and the residents must be provided with information before hearings as well as the  
11 Commissioners if there is any hope to have any public participation. He indicated that he feels the  
12 issue should be sent back to the City Council for clarification on their direction or for them to pass  
13 judgment if they have specific criteria that they are not able to specify to the Commission clearly.  
14 He suggested that the Commissioners at least continue the item to allow themselves time to fairly  
15 and adequately evaluate the changes to the proposal.

16  
17 Director Thompson stated that the plans were available to the public, however the site plan was not  
18 included in the Commissioners' packets. He pointed out that the responsibility of the Commission  
19 is simply to review the south elevation.

20  
21 **Kathy Clark**, stated that she is pleased that the applicant has made an effort to include  
22 landscaping in the design. She commented that with the upscale materials typically used with  
23 new development in the City, she is surprised that the materials proposed to be used for the  
24 project are faux rather than real. She stated that labor is typically the greatest portion of the cost  
25 for construction, and she is not certain of the reason for using false stone rather than real stone.

26  
27 Chairman Lesser closed the public hearing.

28  
29 Commissioner Bohner commented that the charge of the Commission is only to pass judgment  
30 on whether the articulation and landscaping on the south elevation is appropriate or provide  
31 guidance as to how it should be changed. He indicated that he would be satisfied by the design  
32 as proposed but would welcome suggestions from the other Commissioners as to possible  
33 improvements. He stated that the City Council has approved the design, and the jurisdiction of  
34 the Commission is only regarding the proposed changes to the south elevation.

35  
36 Commissioner Seville-Jones said that she does not feel the Commission should take action  
37 without input from the public and without knowing that the public would also be satisfied by the  
38 changes. She stated that she does feel comfortable in proceeding because there was proper  
39 notice; but she believes that the public has a very important role in the process of building  
40 design. She said that the Commission does have a very narrow charge from the City Council.

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1 Commissioner Powell commented that in this case the site plan for the project is very important  
2 for consideration of the proposed revisions. He commented that he frequently will take the site  
3 plans and visit the property in order to visualize a project. He requested that for future projects  
4 the Commissioners be provided with the site plan prior to the hearing. He stated that he agrees  
5 that they are limited in their evaluation to considering the south elevation, and they should state  
6 any changes that they feel should be made to the elevation. He indicated that it is difficult to  
7 approve one elevation without considering the entire structure. He commented that he realizes  
8 that the applicant has worked to reduce the massing of the south elevation. He said that the  
9 Commission has been charged to consider only the south elevation, and they should express their  
10 opinions on changes they feel should be made.

11  
12 Commissioner Fasola commented that the project is large for the City. He stated that he does  
13 not want to be in the position of being an art jury and passing judgment on the design. He  
14 commented that the applicant has taken materials and placed them on the building. He said that  
15 the south elevation is a reflection of the features which he finds unsatisfying with the design. He  
16 commented that the applicant has simply taken materials and pasted them on the building. He  
17 indicated that the design is consistent if the materials are used around the building, but it does not  
18 satisfy the intent of making the south elevation more attractive or reducing the appearance of  
19 bulk.

20  
21 Commissioner Bohner commented that if the Commission provides their opinions that they do  
22 not like the design, they should suggest alternatives that they feel would be preferable in order to  
23 provide direction to the applicant.

24  
25 Chairman Lesser indicated that he also does not want to be in the position of placing judgment  
26 on the design. He said that the City Council has determined that the Variance factors for  
27 approval have been met and that the height is acceptable, and the Commission has a very narrow  
28 charge in reconsidering the project. He stated that the Commission does not have any criteria to  
29 base their opinion. He said that the Commission may decide that they are unable to reach a  
30 conclusion on whether the south elevation is satisfactory because they feel the scale of the  
31 building is too large.

32  
33 Commissioner Bohner said that he would accept the design as proposed but he would also not be  
34 opposed to the Commissioners suggesting any changes. He commented that considering the  
35 redesign of the south elevation is subjective and he is not in a position to instruct the applicant  
36 regarding the design of the façade. He said that he feels the applicant has met the charge of the  
37 City Council of reducing the appearance of bulk. He commented that he would agree that the  
38 design is very busy, and he would be willing to consider suggestions for alternatives. He said  
39 that he would not support the Commission stating that they do not like the proposal and not  
40 providing any direction.

1 Commissioner Seville-Jones commented that the applicant has attempted to reduce the bulk on  
2 the south elevation by adding the stone planter and by adding the trellises which does break up  
3 the height of the building. She stated that she would like more trees to be included, which add a  
4 natural element that would be more attractive. She commented that the appearance of the glass  
5 as proposed is not attractive although it is consistent with the approval of the City Council. She  
6 indicated that the gable may add to the appearance of bulk rather than reducing it. She stated that  
7 she would like to see an additional landscaping plan with other types of trees that may be used.  
8 She commented that she would like to see the trellises with plants that reach up the side of the  
9 building. She commented that the design of the south elevation must remain consistent with the  
10 other sides of the structure. She said that she would support the item being continued to allow  
11 the Commission more of an opportunity to consider the redesign. She indicated that she would  
12 like to see an improved landscape plan with options for the types of trees that could be used.  
13 She commented that she would also like for the gable to be redesigned.

14  
15 Commissioner Powell also said that the purpose of the Commission is not to act as an art jury.  
16 He commented that the subject site is located at a very prominent intersection of the City. He  
17 indicated that the redesign does reduce the appearance of bulk on the south wall. He indicated  
18 that the Commission should be specific in their direction to the applicant regarding changes they  
19 feel should be made to the south elevation. He commented that there should be more  
20 landscaping and that it should not be a type that would grow above the roof line of the structure.

21  
22 Commissioner Bohner commented that his understanding is that the Commissioners would like  
23 to see additional landscaping which would be a more natural approach to reducing the  
24 appearance of bulk.

25  
26 Commissioner Fasola said that he would like a more coherent design that is more consistent  
27 around the building and that would include appropriate landscaping.

28  
29 In response to a question from Commissioner Seville-Jones, Commissioner Fasola indicated that  
30 the left side of the north and west elevations that include stone around the windows be continued  
31 around the building.

32  
33 Chairman Lesser commented that he would be in favor of providing direction to the applicant  
34 which is the direction of the Council. He said that the issue should be returned to the City  
35 Council if the Commission is unable to reach a conclusion.

36  
37 Director Thompson pointed out that the responsibility of the Planning Commission is simply to  
38 consider the issue of whether the appearance of mass has been reduced on the south elevation  
39 and not to provide an opinion on the architectural design.

40  
41 Commissioner Powell commented that he particularly likes the stonework on the west elevation

1 and east elevation and would like it to continue around the structure. He commented that he also  
2 likes the design of the stone around the windows rather than simply attaching gables. He  
3 suggested that for any redesign that the stonework be carried around to the south elevation.  
4

5 **Mr. Superneau** indicated that they could continue the stonework around the windows to the  
6 south elevation. He pointed out that it is the feature that is the tallest portion of the building. He  
7 commented that their charge was to reduce the appearance of bulk on the south elevation, and it  
8 may make the south elevation appear higher rather than lower. He commented that they are  
9 willing to look at options for the design of the south elevation; however, they are very limited in  
10 time for approval of the project and moving forward. He said that they would need specific  
11 direction from the Commissioners on any changes they would like. He indicated that they felt  
12 they addressed the issue of breaking up the massing as directed by the Council. He commented  
13 that it would be difficult to change the materials for only the south elevation that would not effect  
14 the design of the entire building.  
15

16 Commissioner Fasola indicated that he would like for the gable to be redesigned and for the front  
17 and the back of the structure to be made consistent.  
18

19 Commissioner Powell said that he agrees with the suggestions of Commissioner Fasola. He  
20 stated that he would also like for additional landscaping to be added and that would remain at an  
21 appropriate height and not grow beyond the roof line. He indicated that he would like for  
22 additional stonework to be included.  
23

24 Commissioner Seville-Jones said that she would like for the gable to be removed; for additional  
25 stonework to be incorporated; and for additional landscaping to be provided. She requested that  
26 a visualization of the shrubbery in the planter and one or two additional trees along Sepulveda  
27 Boulevard.  
28

29 Commissioner Bohner said that he would want the additional shrubbery to be incorporated; for  
30 the gable to be removed; and for additional stonework to be incorporated.  
31

32 Chairman Lesser said that he would concur with the suggestions of the other Commissioners. He  
33 commented that he hopes the applicant will return at the next meeting with the current plans as  
34 well as with any additional changes so that the Commissioners are able to compare the  
35 differences. He indicated that it is possible that the Commission will return the item to the City  
36 Council to make the final determination.  
37

38 Director Thompson pointed out that the item will not be presented to the City Council. He  
39 commented that staff can implement the changes suggested by the Commission with the item not  
40 returning to the Commission if they are comfortable leaving the final determination to staff.  
41



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1 Commissioner Seville-Jones commented that she would like the item to come back before the  
2 Commission. She commented that they have arrived at suggestions for possibly approving the  
3 massing; however, the applicant has indicated that the suggestion of removing the gable may  
4 actually make the building look larger. She stated that she trusts the opinion of staff but would  
5 be more comfortable having another opportunity to review any new changes.

6  
7 The other Commissioners agreed with Commissioner Seville-Jones that they would also like to  
8 review any new revisions.

9  
10 Commissioner Seville-Jones commented that she would like for the site plan with an explanation  
11 of any new changes to be available to the Commissioners before the next meeting.

12  
13 The Commission agreed to **CONTINUE** the hearing regarding the southerly building façade of an  
14 approved Use Permit for a Proposed Rite Aid Store Located at 1100 Manhattan Beach Blvd to  
15 April 23, 2008.

16  
17 ~~08/040902~~ **Consideration of a Master Use Permit Amendment to Allow the Incidental Sale**  
18 **of Alcoholic Beverages for Off-Site Consumption at an Existing Grocery Store**  
19 **Located at 1830 N. Sepulveda Blvd.**

20  
21 Chairman Lesser indicated that he and his wife are customers of the applicants. He said that the  
22 applicant contacted him to discuss the application, and he directed them to work with staff and  
23 their neighbors. He stated that he has no financial interest in the project and feels he can consider  
24 the application fairly.

25  
26 Assistant Planner Danna summarized the staff report. He stated that the current Master Use  
27 Permit does not allow the sale of alcohol for off site consumption at the subject site. He stated  
28 that the applicant is proposing to amend the current Use Permit to allow the sale of beer and wine  
29 for off site consumption. He indicated that approximately 7 to 8 percent of the total shelf area is  
30 proposed to be dedicated to the sale of alcohol. He indicated that conditions are included that  
31 alcohol sales shall be limited to 10 percent of the total floor area and permanent sign notifications  
32 or additions to advertising the sale of alcohol will not be permitted. He commented that  
33 Conditions 37 through 39 have been added to the Resolution, and all of the other conditions will  
34 remain the same. He said that the Traffic Engineer has concluded that the proposal would not  
35 result in a negative impact to the parking demand. He said that the Police and Fire Departments  
36 as well as the Public Works and Building Safety Departments have expressed no concerns. He  
37 indicated that the applicant has submitted a petition with the signature of 407 customers and  
38 residents in support of the proposal. He stated that notice was mailed to property owners within  
39 500 feet of the site and was published in the Beach Reporter. He said that staff did not receive  
40 any public comments regarding the proposal.



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**Stantec**

April 17, 2008  
File: RIT07024.2

Dan Moreno  
City of Manhattan Beach  
1400 Highland Avenue  
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

**Attention: Planning Commission, City of Manhattan Beach, California**

**Reference: Rite Aid, Southeast corner of Manhattan Beach Blvd. & Sepulveda Blvd.**

Commissioners,

In response to your comments at the last Planning Commission hearing, we have made the following revisions to our design:

1. The gable end element has been removed from the South Elevation. It has been replaced with an element similar to that used on the North Elevation.
2. Additional stone veneer has been added to the South Elevation, particularly on the new central element.
3. The number of trellis elements on the South Elevation has been reduced, leaving more room for dense landscape.
4. More landscaping has been added to the South Elevation to help break up the façade. In addition, the palm trees have been replaced with lower, broader trees, and a large accent tree has been added in the planter next to the landing at the Southeast corner.

We believe that these changes should adequately address your concerns, and look forward to your approval of this design.

Respectfully,

**STANTEC CONSULTING INC. (formerly RHL Design Group)**



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PC