



HAWTHORNE PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT AGENDA ITEM PC-2024-25

DATE: January 15, 2025
SUBJECT: Design Review Application No. DR-2024-0012
FROM: Gregg McClain, Planning Director
BY: Anais Bermudez, Assistant Planner

PROJECT INFORMATION

SUMMARY: Design Review Application No. DR-2024-0012 is a request for design review of a proposed facade remodel of an existing commercial property.

LOCATION: 3820 W. El Segundo Blvd. (APN No. 4050-007-041)

APPLICANT: George Boukather, Branch Investment Group

REPRESENTATIVE: David Johnson, DMJ Architectural Group

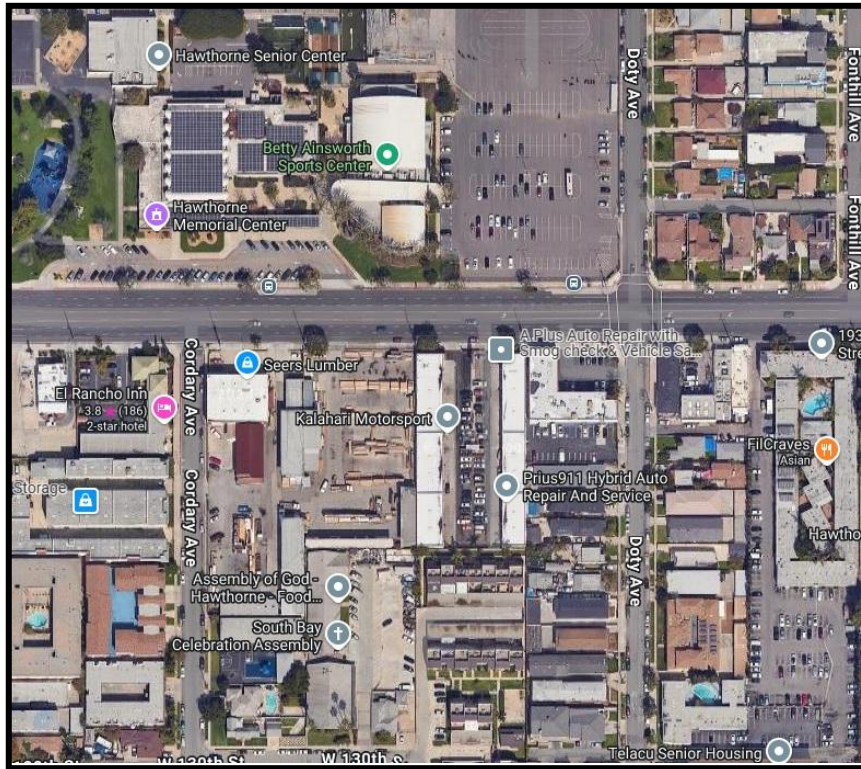
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project site consists of two single-story automobile repair garages on a parcel measuring 48,618 sq. ft. The property was developed in 1985 and according to building permit records, the existing structures total approximately 22,000 sq. ft.

Design Review application DR-2024-0012 is a request to approve exterior facade improvements. The scope of work includes the remodel of two building faces, replacement of canopies, and the installation of new siding. The area of work covers 1,030 sq. ft. of building area and therefore requires a design review. The Hawthorne Municipal Code (HMC) Chapter 17.99.030 states that commercial additions or improvements greater than one thousand sq. ft. require design review.

As shown on the vicinity map below, the project site is located on the south side of W. El Segundo Blvd., between Cordary Ave. and Doty Ave. A mix of urban open space, commercial, industrial, medium, and high density residential land uses surround the site.

Vicinity Map



Current Site Conditions



The proposal only includes facade improvements for the portions of the buildings that directly face El Segundo Blvd. Therefore, the rear of the structures, landscaping, and parking will not be included in the design review.

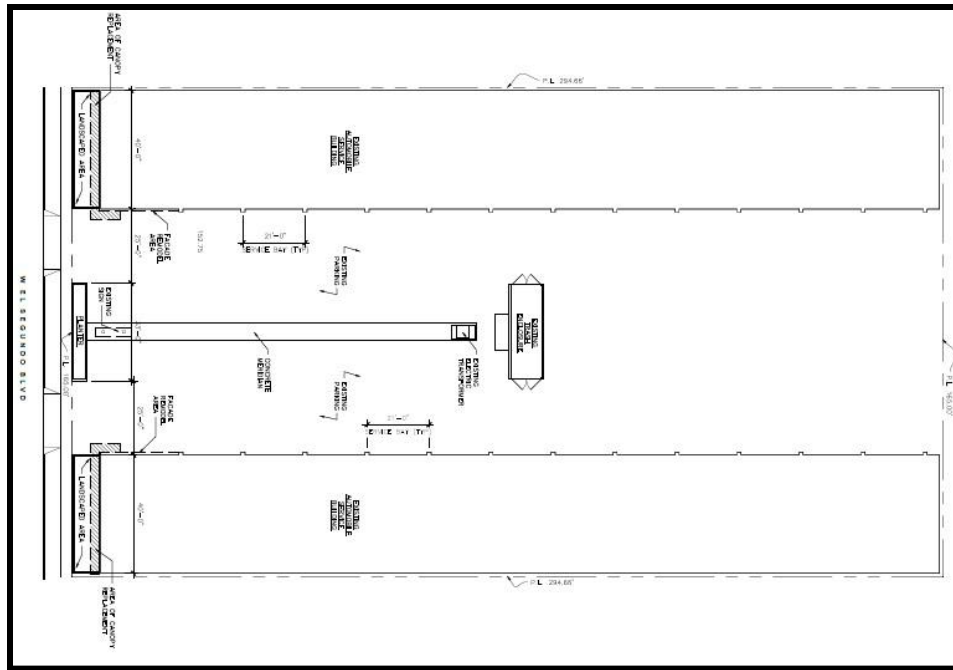
Building records indicate the existing buildings were constructed in 1985 and are approximately 11,350 sq. ft. each. Each building contains office space and 11 garage bays where automobile repair is conducted. The buildings, parking lot, and landscaping are maintained in good condition by the property owner.

The project's scope of work is limited to the existing building facades and will not increase building area or change the layout of the site. In addition, the project does not propose modifications to the existing parking stalls, landscaped area, or to the entrances to the site.

Site Photos



Site Plan



The proposed facade improvements will include the following upgrades:

- New modern facade (removal of outdated clay tile roof canopy along the building frontages)
- New decorative accent canopy (see renderings below)
- New plank siding in an updated modern color scheme

The existing aluminum windows and doors will remain as they are in great condition. The roof of the building and the rear of the building will also remain unchanged. The proposed design is modern, with two shades of siding to be utilized for the building frontages. The HMC requires that a minimum of three complementary colors be used for each building. The proposal meets this criterion as the design includes different paint colors for the base, accent, and trim. The existing windows are framed by a rich shade of black aluminum and the existing walls excluded from the scope of work will remain a light shade of concrete plaster. As seen in the renderings below, the design evokes a sleek and modern industrial look that will enhance the building's visual impact along El Segundo Blvd.

Rendering



GENERAL PLAN, ZONING, AND OTHER POLICY PLANS

The subject property is located within the Limited Industrial (M-1) zone. As shown in the maps below – the current zoning is not in conformity with the General Plan land use designation which is General Commercial. Although the zoning land use designation is not in conformity with that of the General Plan, the property maintains a status of legal nonconformity. The current industrial land use may continue as long as the existing industrial structures remain and there is not a lapse in operations greater than two years. In future, if the property is redeveloped for commercial use, the legal nonconforming status, which permits industrial use, would be lost, and the parcel would be brought up to the General Plan’s designated land use of the time.

Zoning Map



General Plan Map



Design Review

The Hawthorne Municipal Code (HMC) contains requirements applicable to all properties within the Limited Industrial (M-1) zone as it relates to the design of a project site. These requirements include standards for building height, floor area, open space, and landscaping of a project. A Design Review is required for projects involving new construction of more than 1,000 sq. ft. and projects that are adjacent to residentially zoned properties.

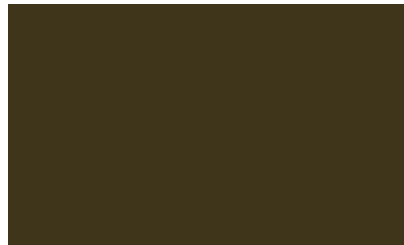
The applicant is proposing a facade improvement of over 1,000 sq. ft. and is adjacent to residential uses and therefore requires the review defined in Chapter 17.99 – Design Review.

Colors:

The proposal utilizes colors and materials that present a modern industrial facade (Attachment 1). The HMC requires that a minimum of three complementary colors be used for the color scheme. This criterion has been met as the design includes different paint colors for the base, accent, and trim. The base color will be a fiber cement siding in the shade “teak” as shown below. The contrasting material will be a metal panel in the shade “dark bronze”. As seen in the renderings above, these paint colors provide a cohesive and balanced contrast. The existing windows are framed by a rich shade of black aluminum and the existing walls excluded from the scope of work will remain a light beige shade of concrete plaster. The design evokes a sleek and modern industrial look that will enhance the aesthetic of the property’s appearance.



Teak (Base Color)



Dark Bronze (Trim Color)



Beige (Accent Color)

Landscaping:

The proposal does not include any changes to the existing landscaping. The front setbacks will remain enclosed by the existing two ft. high concrete block walls with wrought iron fencing above. The landscaping also includes shrubbery and wood chips which present a minimal and attractive green space. The front setbacks also benefit from the added greenery of the blue agave trees. The applicant has provided a landscape plan to highlight the existing site conditions (Attachment 1).

Findings:

Prior to the granting of a Design Review four specific findings are required, as follows:

1. The location, size, design and characteristics of the proposed project will be compatible with and will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare of persons residing in or working in or adjacent to the proposed project.

The project site is located on the south side of El Segundo Blvd. located between Cordary Ave. and Doty Ave. The property is surrounded by a mix of land uses which include commercial, industrial, medium, and high density residential.

The goal of the project is to modernize and improve the property by enhancing the appearance of the buildings and the surrounding area. The proposed design is compatible within the area as other updated industrial structures dot El Segundo Blvd. The proposal will not be detrimental to the surrounding neighborhood nor pose a threat to the public health, safety, or welfare of adjacent properties as the improvements are limited to aesthetic changes.

2. The proposed design is suitable for its purpose, is harmonious with and relates properly to, the surrounding neighborhood, contiguous parcels, and the site itself.

The proposal is suitable for the property's current industrial land use and does not include any design changes that differ from what is already present in the surrounding neighborhood. Further, the development is located in the appropriate zone and is adjacent to similar uses.

3. The overall design will be of quality that will preserve the integrity of, and upgrade, the existing neighborhood.

The design proposes colors and materials that will improve the visual impact of the buildings. In addition, this review finds that the existing on-site parking will be sufficient to accommodate the continued use and potential parking conflicts with adjacent uses are not anticipated. The facade and existing landscaping will beautify and enhance the pedestrian experience along this section of El Segundo Blvd.

The architectural design and height is of a scale that fits within the parcel and therefore, the preservation and integrity of the neighborhood, specifically of those residential properties directly adjacent to the subject site is achieved. The proposal does not include changes to building height or size and is limited to facade improvements.

4. The design of the proposed project is in accordance with the general plan and all applicable provisions of the zoning ordinance.

The proposed project is consistent with the Zoning Code's land use designation, Limited Industrial (M-1), of the site for the following reasons:

- The Zoning Code designates the property as Limited Industrial which is intended for a variety of industrial uses, such as warehousing, manufacturing, and other skilled crafts.

- The facade will be renovated and continued to be occupied by the existing tenants offering automobile repair services. The existing land use is compatible with the Limited Industrial (M-1) zone.
- Goal 1 of the Land Use Element of the General Plan encourages efforts to expand, attract, and enhance commercial development.
 - Policy 1.4 specifies that the City shall support and encourage the rehabilitation or renovation of existing buildings or structures or the conversion of obsolete and/or chronically vacant storefronts from their original or most recent use to a new compatible, economically viable, and sustainable use.
 - This project presents an opportunity to implement Policy 1.4 as the applicant wishes to renovate an existing storefront in need of modernization. This policy encourages renovation as a way of maintaining economic viability which benefits the business and the City.
- Goal 3 of the Land Use Element encourages the City to pursue a sound local economy which attracts investment, increases the tax base, creates employment opportunities for Hawthorne residents and generate public revenues.
 - Policy 3.5 encourages the revitalization of declining commercial and industrial areas through new development, rehabilitation and that other means that may be available shall be considered and, if advantageous, implemented.
 - The project falls directly in line with Policy 3.5 as the applicant has proposed a rehabilitation of existing building facades. The Land Use Element states projects such as these, which aim to upgrade dated industrial centers, will attract investment in the City and benefit the local economy.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Notice of the public hearing for this item was provided in accordance with Chapter 17.06 of the HMC. The Planning Department published a public hearing notice in the local paper on November 7, 2024, and mailed notification to property owners within a 300-foot radius of the site.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Design Review DR-2024-0012 is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Class 1 for Existing Facilities. This project consists of exterior alterations to the existing structure that will not result in an increase of gross floor area. The goal of the project is to improve the facade by removing and replacing the dated storefront. The scope of work is minor and will not involve an expansion to the existing building nor additional height and only involves exterior facade improvements. Further, no exceptions identified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 are applicable; Staff will file the Notice of Exemption with the Los Angeles County Clerk's office in compliance with CEQA (Attachment 4).

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the analysis of the issues and conditions of approval, the proposal complies with the HMC and will not result in negative impacts to the surrounding neighborhood. Accordingly, Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt PC Resolution 2024-25 (Attachment 3) adopting a Notice of Exemption and approving Design Review Application DR-2024-0012.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Site Plans/Landscape Plan/Rendering
2. Notice of Public Hearing
3. PC Resolution 2024-25
4. Notice of Exemption (NOE)

Attachment 1
Site Plans/Renderings

Attachment 2
Notice of Public Hearing

Attachment 3
PC Resolution 202X-X

Attachment 4
Notice of Exemption