

Planning, Land Use and Mobility Committee



Revised Hotel design presented at 2/7/19 PLUM Committee meeting showing Ventura Blvd, frontage from the east.

Case Report: Ventura Hotel Project (Revised)
CPC-2016-4785-VZC-HD-SPE-CU-CUB-SPP-SPR
20401 W. Ventura Blvd.
Woodland Hills, 91364

PLUM Hearings: December 15, 2016 (Courtesy Hearing)
January 19, 2017 (Second Courtesy Hearing)
May 18, 2017 (Presentation)
October, 19, 2017 (*Revised Plan/Down-sized*)
November 2, 2017 (Presentation—Revised Plan)
January 3, 2019 (Presentation of new plan with CD-3 guidelines)
January 17, 2019 (Revised Plan—working discussion)
February 7, 2019 Presentation of **6th Revised Design**

Site Location: 20401 W. Ventura Blvd. (Chalk Hill location)
Woodland Hills, CA 91364

Project:

Discussion and possible action for construction of a 86,710 SF, 4-story, 66-foot high hotel with 149 guest rooms, restaurant, café and bar/lounge, and two levels of subterranean parking for 219 vehicles located at 20401 Ventura Blvd. Applicant is requesting a Height District Change, a Specific Plan Exception, a CUB for a hotel dining room, and Conditional Use Permits for alcoholic beverages and for hotel use within the RAS4-1L Zone. The site's lot area is 53,433 SF and the proposed FAR for the structure is 1.62:1.

Applicant: Kamyar Marouni (MI Trading Group, Inc.): kamyar@megaintl.com
Representatives: Rosenheim & Associates, Inc.
Brad Rosenheim: brad@raa-inc.com
Heather Waldstein: heather@raa-inc.com
Ad-hoc Committee: Marty Lipkin, PLUM Committee

Previous PLUM Presentations:

Including February 7, 2019, there have been 8 presentations for a proposed hotel project near the apex of Chalk Hill on Ventura Blvd., overlooking the 101 Freeway. The February 7 PLUM presentation is the 6th architectural version being submitted. Previous versions were rejected by the CD-3 and neighborhood groups for issues of height and density, or for architectural issues from the PLUM Committee. For the 8th presentation, the proposed height, operating features and FAR have been vetted to the Council District-3 office and to potentially impacted neighbors, and are approved to continue through the Neighborhood Council review process if endorsed by the PLUM Committee.

Requests and entitlements agreed to by the CD-3 Council Office and Neighbors:

Throughout the design process, the CD-3 Council Office and neighborhood groups have met and discussed limitation, exceptions and entitlements with the developer. The agreed to elements are:

- Vesting Zone Change/Height District Change: pursuant to LAMC Section 12.32 Q, from the P-1LD, C2-1LD, and C4-1LD Zones to RAS4-1LD Zone.
- Specific Plan Exception: pursuant to LAMC Section 11.5.7(F), to permit an increase in FAR to 1.62:1 in lieu of permitted 1:1 FAR / Driveway to be located in front of building / Height to 66-feet in lieu of permitted 30-feet.
- Conditional Use Permit; Pursuant to LAMC Section 12.24 W.24©, to allow hotel in RAS4-1L Zone
- Site Plan Review: Pursuant to LAMC Section 16.05, for a development project that results in an increase of 50 or more guest rooms.
- Conditional Use Permit: Pursuant to LAMC Section 12.24 W.1, for sale or dispensing of alcoholic beverages in conjunction with food service.
- Project Permit Compliance approval: Pursuant to LAMC Section 11.5.7© to allow the proposed project with geographic boundaries of the Ventura Blvd.-Cahuenga Blvd. Corridor Specific Plan.

Project Description:

The applicant proposed to construct a 4-story, 66-foot high, 86,710 SF hotel featuring 149 guest rooms, a small restaurant, café, and a bar/lounge for hotel guests. There will be two levels of below grade parking for guests and employees allowing for 219 total spaces—40 of which will be tandem. Total required parking is 205 spaces with a 10 space bicycle allowance reduction.

The building site is 53,433 SF on a cleared lot that was formerly the location for approximately 5 different restaurants that failed. The property stood vacant for almost 5 years before the restaurant buildings were razed due to homeless encroachment. The site is in the Ventura Blvd.—Cahuenga Blvd. Corridor Specific Plan, adjacent to a small office building and a senior living complex. There is an office complex about 500-feet away on the same side of Ventura Blvd. that rises to approximately 66-feet in height.

6th Architectural Design: Analysis:

After discussing the previous (5th) design with the PLUM Committee, the developer and architect have incorporated numerous architectural design changes into this design that have made a significant difference to the presence of the structure when viewed from both Ventura Blvd., and from the 101 Freeway to the north.

The signature architectural element of the mosaic-clad elevator tower has been retained from previous iterations, but that architectural element is echoed by the use of a vertical mosaic band running vertically through the north-facing façade of the building.



West and east facades from Ventura Blvd. showing motor court area, mosaic window treatment and “frames” for windows.

The Ventura-facing wing of the hotel is angled slightly away from the boulevard, and now has a wedge-shaped design that keeps it from “looming” over the street. The architect has proposed a “mosaic” of glass panels for all of the hotel’s residential floors (2-4) that break up the continuity of glass and add visual interest. Eight angled “frames” add another visual dimension to the south façade, and serve to further break up the glass expanse. The ground level of building facing Ventura Blvd. is open to create a unique motor court and space for passenger pick-ups and drop-offs. There is a front patio area for guests and an open balcony patio with a pool above it.

The north façade of the hotel features the main residential and service areas and overlooks the ten lanes of the 101 Freeway below. Again, windows for all hotel rooms are arranged in a mosaic design, and the windows on both sides of the vertical, lighted mosaic band are canted to either the east or west to guarantee privacy for homes across the Freeway. The bottom floor of the north structure is the parking area and it is shielded from view by decorative architectural screening to hide cars from view and allow air flow. The mosaic window designs, colorful mosaic center element and large screen areas help break up the mass of the structure along the Freeway and provide an interesting visual effect for both motorists and homeowners across the Freeway.

The final landscape design and elements have not been provided, and landscaping elements have been removed from the renderings so that the architectural design can be better evaluated.



In the opinion of this evaluator, the changes made to both the southern frontage and the northern façade add critical visual interest to the project and enhance the basic project design that was presented in the previous iteration. With the new design, this structure has the ability to significantly and positively impact this section of Ventura Blvd., and help revitalize this area

Previous submitted project designs:

Fifth project design submitted January 17, 2019



The 5th iteration of this hotel design took its cue from the original and the second version designs of the project, but with significantly reduced height, and a motor court entry that was positioned under the guest room wing of the structure that faced Ventura Blvd. The design retained the colorful mosaic elevator tower at the northeast end. The Ventura wing was angled away from the street front.



The bulk of the hotel faced the 101 Freeway and presented a relatively flat façade, with several different window and structural areas breaking up the expanse of guest rooms on the north facing wall.

In general, the PLUM Committee felt that returning to some of the key features of the original design for the hotel was a positive step, singling out the mosaic elevator tower and the angled residential wing along Ventura Blvd. However, two major elements of concern arose. First, it



was revealed that the artist’s rendering of the wing facing Ventura Blvd. was inaccurate, showing what appeared to be a wedge-shape design that was enthusiastically liked by the Committee was instead a flat façade—which some PLUM members felt was too weighty and boring. Second, the north façade facing the 101 Freeway was felt to be too massive and architecturally uninspired. One request was to add back the “greenery waterfall” in the center from the second design and cant the windows for both of the newly separated sides.

Fourth project design submitted January 3, 2019



The 4th iteration which was submitted by the Applicant to conform to the size, height and service restriction requested by the CD-3 office and by a neighborhood homeowner group. It was almost unanimously disliked by the PLUM Committee, and was even disliked by the representative from the homeowners. It was considered to be too squat, too formal and too

blocky. The “cloud-like” roof overhangs were disliked by the Committee. The 101 Freeway side was evaluated as being boring, “institutional” and unwelcoming.

Third project design submitted mid-2018.



Following meetings and negotiations about height allowance, size, amenity features and front reception area with the CD-3 office and homeowner groups, the Applicant presented a down-sized project that eliminated two floors and the restaurant roof deck from the original 8+ story design. The architect kept the curved mosaic feature from the original plan, and added the “cloud” roof awnings. This version met with an acceptable response from the PLUM Committee, but the homeowners and CD-3 still felt it would be too large and imposing on the top of Chalk Hill.

Second project design submitted November, 2017.



The second design for the hotel added a roof garden to the top rear floor and raised the height to approximately 118-feet. It featured a grand entrance from Ventura Blvd. and the rounded mosaic corner was turned into a bar for the pool deck. The oval central elevator core was enlarged and rear of the hotel overlooking the 101 Freeway was featured two wings with a central 8-story “green waterfall “of plantings. Windows on both wings facing the 101 were canted to preserve the privacy of residents on the opposite side of the Freeway.

The majority of the PLUM Committee liked this version of the project and agreed that it should be sent to the CD-3 for their assessment and neighbor groups. Both the CD-3 and the homeowners disliked the height, size and rooftop restaurant which they feared would cause light pollution and noise. The Councilman wrote a letter to the Applicant telling him he would not approve the project in this form, and suggested working with the CD-3 staff and neighbors to see how the project could be down-sized.

First iteration of the proposed hotel (Renderings not included)

Initial architectural plans for the hotel atop Chalk Hill during the initial Courtesy Presentation were very similar to the second design (see above) except the building was shorter, there was no roof restaurant, and the motor court was much smaller. The curved mosaic corner “tower” was a key architectural element. The slanting residential wing facing Ventura was slightly reduced. The back of the hotel was one continuous block of various-sized windows.

PLUM Motion:

Discussion and possible action as pertaining to case CPC-2016-4785-VCZ-HD-SPE-CU-CUB-SPP-SPR:

Having held eight (8) public meetings for the application filed by Kam Marouni of MI Trading Group Inc., for construction of a 86,710 SF, 4-story, 66-foot high hotel with 149 guest rooms and two levels of subterranean parking for 219 vehicles located at 20401 Ventura Blvd., and requesting a Height District Change, a Specific Plan Exception, a CUB for a hotel dining room, and Conditional Use Permits for alcoholic beverages and for hotel use within the RAS4-1LZone, the WHWCNC Planning, Land Use and Mobility Committee hereby finds that:

WHEREAS the PLUM Committee opines that the project generally meets the requirements for the Ventura Blvd.-Cahuenga Blvd. Corridor Specific Plan; and

WHEREAS the project conforms to the height, number of stories, floor area and use limitations agreed to and imposed by the CD-3 Council Office and neighborhood groups in order to qualify for a Specific Plan Exception and Vesting Zone Change/Height District Change; and

WHEREAS the project's requests for a Conditional Use Permit to allow hotel use within the RAS4-1L Zone, and request for a Project Permit Compliance approval within the geographic boundaries of the Ventura Blvd,-Cahuenga Blvd. Corridor Specific Plan meet the conditions set by the CD-3 Council District; and

WHEREAS, the request for a CUB for sale or dispensing of alcoholic beverages in conjunction with food service complies with the requirements set forth by the State; and

WHEREAS the PLUM Committee opines that after six (6) designs, the architecture, site plan and Ventura Blvd. entry and frontage will be a significant asset to the Chalk Hill area of Woodland Hills: and

WHEREAS the applicant has been diligent in working with the PLUM Committee as well as with neighborhood groups and the Council District-3 office to find architectural solutions and reach height and massing compromises for construction of a hotel on this site,

THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Planning, Land Use and Mobility Committee of the WHWCNC, for the findings and considerations stated herein, finds that the submitted application and plans tendered by Kamyar Marouni for MI Trading Group, Inc., receive the support of the Board of the Woodland Hills-Warner Center Neighborhood Council for the requested development and actions contingent upon the following conditions:

Conditions

- 1.) All plans, renderings and elevations for the project presented on February 13, 2019 at the Board Meeting of the Woodland Hills-Warner Center Neighborhood Council (WHWCNC) shall be dated as such and re-submitted to Planning as an (updated) project application submittal.
- 2.) The applicant will not submit any significant, further updated plans without first presenting them to the WHWCNC for support.
- 3.) Additionally, all conditions listed herein shall be printed on one of the Project Summary pages as a commitment to, and acceptance of these conditions.
- 4.) Temporary signage showing rendering of the approved structure, plus specifics as to size, ownership and contact information shall be erected and maintained during the construction phase(s) of the project as the Ventura-Cahuenga Specific Plan allows.
- 5.) A landscape plan must be submitted to the WHWCNC Board for approval at this project's presentation to the WHWCNC Board.
- 6.) No banners or temporary signage shall be attached to the exterior of the completed structure.
- 7.) The Applicant shall present a color design for the mosaic designs to be used for the elevator tower and the north façade to the WHWCNC Board for approval before construction commences.

The Planning, Land Use and Mobility Committee recommends that the Board of the Woodland Hills – Warner Center Neighborhood Council advise the city of Los Angeles Planning Department and Council District 3 Councilmember Bob Blumenfield of its findings and subsequent recommendation to APPROVE this application presented on February 13, 2019.

Motion: Marty Lipkin
Second: Ray Cole

Vote: **Aye: 9** **Nay: 0** **Abstain: 0**