

August 16, 2023

**ITEM TITLE: CONSTRUCTION OF A MIXED-USE BUILDING WITH GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL SPACE & 12 RESIDENTIAL UNITS (TWO VERY-LOW INCOME) & CEQA GUIDELINES EXEMPTION SECTION 15332 AT 981 & 983 CALLA AVENUE USE-22-0100. (0600-20)**

**ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT:**

Community Development

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The owner of a property at 981 & 983 Calla Avenue, which is in the C/MU-1 (General Commercial & Mixed-Use) Zone, has initiated the process to demolish the existing structures and construct a new three-story mixed-use building that would include a ground floor commercial space measuring approximately 777 square feet and twelve residential units (inclusive of two very-low income affordable units), and a six-car parking garage. The project was reviewed by the Design Review Board on June 15, 2023, and the Design Review Board recommended approval of the project's design with recommendations with a vote of 3-1 (1 absent).

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council hold the public hearing; consider public input, and adopt Resolution 2023-68, approving Regular Coastal Permit (CP-22-0016), Design Review Case (DRC-22-0030), Site Plan Review (SPR-22-0031), and categorical exemption pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines 15332 Class 32 (In-Fill Development Projects) at 981 & 983 Calla Avenue (APN 626-221-24-00) in the C/MU-1 (General Commercial and Mixed-Use) Zone subject to the conditions as specified in the attached resolution.

**OPTIONS:**

In addition to receiving this report and adopting staff's recommendations, the City Council can:

- Approve the project with modifications requested by the City Council; or
- Disapprove the project and deny the requested permits by making specific findings for denial; or
- Continue the Public Hearing to a specific future meeting to allow staff to provide additional information upon which a decision can be rendered.

## BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

An application (USE-22-0100) was submitted to the City on September 6, 2022, for Regular Coastal Permit (CP-22-0016), Design Review Case (DRC-22-0030), & Site Plan Review (SPR-22-0031), proposing to demolish the existing structures and construct a new three-story vertical mixed-use building that would include an approximately 777 square foot ground floor commercial space, twelve residential units (inclusive of two very-low income affordable units), and a six-car parking garage at 981 & 983 Calla Avenue (APN 626-221-24-00) in the C/MU-1 (General Commercial and Mixed-Use) Zone.



The project site is an existing 7,034 square foot (0.16-acre) lot fronting Calla Avenue. The project involves the demolition of two existing one-story single-family residences and the construction of a new vertical mixed-use structure. The vertical mixed-use building would front Calla Avenue with the front of the building including a ground floor commercial space measuring approximately 777 square feet with a first-floor mezzanine and 64 square foot open patio. One residential unit would be located on the ground floor behind the commercial space and six parking spaces, including one ADA space, would be in the rear of the building. Five residential units would be provided on the second floor and six additional residential units would be provided on the third floor, each with a roof deck. Vehicular ingress and egress to the property would be provided from the existing alley on the south side of the property. The areas that are south, east, and west of the project site are zoned C/MU-1 (General Commercial & Mixed Use), similar to the subject site, whereas the area north of the project site is zoned R-2000 (Medium-Density Residential). The property south of the project site includes a church, which is a semi-public use, while the properties north, east, and west of the project site are residential uses.

Building Orientation and Design: The proposed vertical mixed-use building is presented in a modern architectural design, which includes a minimalist aesthetic featuring clean lines, large north facing glass windows, and exposed building materials. The ground floor commercial space would front Calla Avenue and would include a 64 square foot open air patio that would be located adjacent to the sidewalk between the structure and the street. Pedestrian access to the building's residential areas would be accessed from Calla Avenue via a concrete walkway located on the northeast corner of the property. Residents would find various features promoting multi-modal transportation such as bike racks, a bike repair station, and a transit and rideshare information kiosk along the walkway. An art mural on the east elevation and Amazon lockers will also be provide for the enjoyment of the residents. To provide variation and relief from the massing of the building, the project proposes increased setbacks along the eastern property line, varied roof heights, and a balcony for each unit which would be provided on all proposed building elevations. Two open staircases facing east would be provided toward the center of the building to provide access to the upper floor apartment units. The roof of the building is proposed as non-habitable space and would feature solar panels and other mechanical equipment, which would be screened by a parapet. Off-street parking would be provided on the ground floor in the form of a six-car parking garage and would be in the rear of the building and thus accessed off the existing alley.

The residential units vary in size and range between 548 sq. ft. and 1,147 sq. ft. and include one, two, and three-bedroom units.

The utilization of the commercial space is yet to be determined. The floor-to-ceiling height of the ground floor commercial space would measure 15' – 10 1/2" meeting the minimum fifteen-foot floor-to-ceiling height requirement per Imperial Beach Municipal Code Section 19.27.070. The overall height of the building, including the roof decks, parapets, and elevator structure, is approximately 41.17', however, roof structures for the housing of equipment required to maintain and operate the building and parapet walls required by law may extend above the height limit (ref. IBMC Section 19.40.020). Exclusive of the portions of the structure that may extend above the height limit, the building height is 39.17' on the north and 32.92' on the south, which complies with the maximum building height requirement of four stories or 40 feet for the C/MU-1, General Commercial and Mixed-Use, Zone (IMBC Section 19.26.070).



VIEW FROM NORTHWEST



DAY VIEW FROM SOUTHEAST





**1** VIEW FROM COURTYEARD  
3/8" = 1'-0"

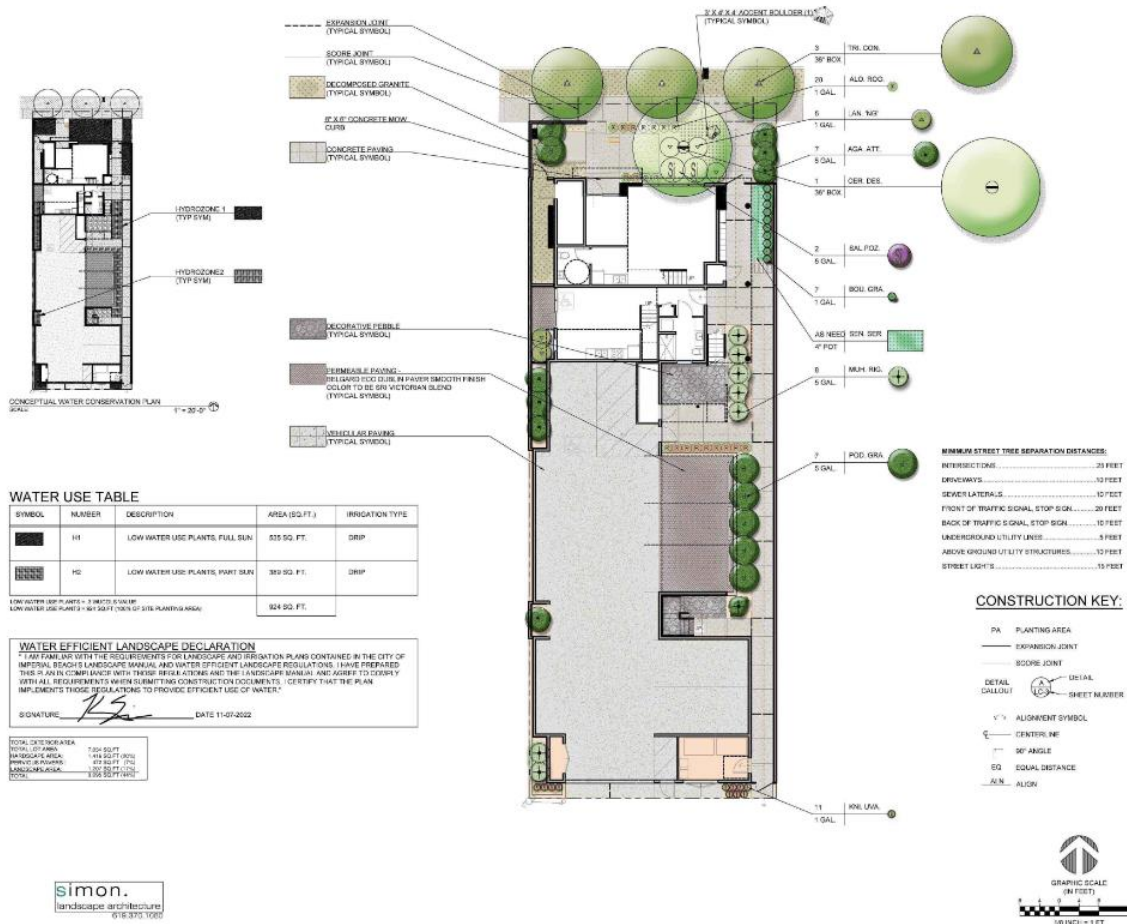
**Building Materials:** The building would include a variation in architectural features and materials such as large north facing windows to allow for natural light, balconies on all elevations, black vinyl window frames, a fiber cement cantilever above the commercial space, open walkways along the second and third floors, and two shades of stucco for the exterior including white & gray.

The building accents include composite wood horizontal siding, horizontal wood boards to screen the stairways, black metal railings for the balconies and matching black exterior light fixtures, wood fences along the east and west property lines, a concrete walkway for residents, and permeable brick pavers provided for three parking spaces. The design of the project conforms with the intent and

purpose of the design standards outlined in IBMC Section 19.83.010 and contributes positively to the C/MU-1, General Commercial and Mixed-Use, Zone, which is primarily comprised of multi-family residences within the vicinity of the project site.

**Lighting:** Exterior lighting and recessed lighting has been incorporated throughout the site and on all building elevations to provide pedestrian scale lighting and enhance the architecture of the building and landscaped areas of the site. Additionally, there are lighting fixtures placed on the walls of the exterior of the entrances to the parking and trash enclosure areas that would be placed beside the doors and not above entryways to ensure that the lighting would enhance safety and circulation but not impact the surrounding neighbors and uses. All the lighting and lighting fixtures are architecturally compatible and scaled to the buildings with consideration for energy efficiency.

**Landscaping:** Typically, projects require 15% of the site to be landscaped. The project proposes to provide 1,207 square feet of landscaping on the ground level along the property's perimeters for a total 17% of site as planted landscaping at grade. The landscaping would include various shrubs, succulents, groundcovers, accent boulders, and a tree. Additionally, the development proposes 472 square feet of permeable pavers as the surface for three of the six parking spaces provided. Furthermore, three new trees would be planted in the parkway adjacent to the property as part of the project. Two six-foot tall wooden fences would be installed along the east and west property lines and a 6' tall metal gate would be located on the north and south entrances to the property.



PLANT MATERIAL LEGEND								
	CALLOUT SYMBOL	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	SIZE	MINIMUM HEIGHT AND SPREAD (MATURE HEIGHT / SPREAD)	IRRIGATION DEMANDS H - HIGH M - MODERATE L - LOW N - RAINFALL ONLY	REMARKS	
TREES								
		CER. FLO.	CERCIDIUM FLORIBUNDA 'DESERT MUSEUM'	THORNLESS PALO VERDE	36" BOX	8'X6' (20' X 20')	L	MULTI- TRUNK; FULL HEAD, GOOD FORM AND CALIPER
		TRI. CON.	TRISTANIA CONFERTA	BRISBANE BOX	36" BOX	8'X6' (20' X 20')	L	SINGLE TRUNK; FULL HEAD, GOOD FORM AND CALIPER
SHRUBS & SUCCULENTS								
		AGA. ATT.	AGAVE ATTENUATA	FOX TAIL AGAVE	5 GAL.	18" x 12" (4' x 3')	L	FULL CLUMPS, FULL FORM, GOOD COLOR, VIGOROUS
		ALO. ROO.	ALOE RUDIKOPPE 'LITTLE GEM'	LITTLE GEM ALOE	1 GAL.	12" x 12" (2' x 3')	L	FULL FORM AND COLOR, VIGOROUS
		BOU. GRA.	BOUTELOUA GRACILIS 'BLONDE AMBITION'	BLOND AMBITION BLUE GAMA GRASS	1 GAL.	10" X 8" (18" x 18")	L	FULL CLUMPS, GOOD COLOR, VIGOROUS
		KNL. UVA.	KNIPHOPHIA UVARIA	RED HOT POKER	1 GAL.	12" x 8" (2' x 2')	L	FULL CLUMPS, FULL FORM, GOOD COLOR, VIGOROUS
		LAN. 'NG'	LANTANA 'NEW GOLD'	DWARF YELLOW LANTANA	1 GAL.	12" x 8" (2' x SPREADING)	L	FULL FORM AND COLOR, VIGOROUS
		MUH. DUB.	MUHLENBERGIA DUBIA	PINE MUHLY	5 GAL.	18" x 12" (4' x 4')	L	FULL CLUMPS, FULL FORM, GOOD COLOR, VIGOROUS
		POD. GRA.	PODOCARPUS GRACILIOR	YEW PINE HEDGE	5 GAL.	18" x 12" (20' x 6')	L	FULL FORM AND COLOR, VIGOROUS
		SAL. POZ.	SALVIA 'POZO BLUE'	POZO BLUE SAGE	5 GAL.	18" x 12" (4' x 4')	L	FULL FORM AND COLOR, VIGOROUS
GROUNDCOVERS								
		SEN. SER.	SENECIO SERPENS	BLUE CHALKSTICKS	4" POT	4" x 4" (6" x SPREADING)	L	FULL CLUMPS, GOOD COLOR, PLANT 12" O.C.

Parking: The project proposes to provide six parking spaces for the residential component of the project at a ratio of 0.5 spaces per dwelling unit. Per Government Code Section 65915(p)(2) "...if a development includes at least 11 percent very low income units for housing developments...is located within one-half mile of a major transit stop, and there is unobstructed access to the major transit stop from the development, then, upon the request of the developer, a city shall not impose a vehicular parking ratio, inclusive of parking for persons with a disability and guests, that exceeds 0.5 spaces per unit." The 6 residential parking spaces are provided in the form of a parking garage on the ground level with concrete surfacing and permeable pavers. Additionally, the project owner has volunteered to include Transportation Demand Management strategies, including bicycle parking, a kiosk for transit and rideshare information, a bicycle repair station, and monthly subsidized transit passes for MTS (50% subsidy of the cost of the MTS regional pass per dwelling unit), to requesting residents within the development for 10 years of the project after the certificate of occupancy is issued. The owner will notify each new resident of the availability of this benefit and can provide proof of participation if requested.

Regarding commercial parking, Imperial Beach Municipal Code Section 19.48.035 provides standards for required spaces for mixed-use projects in the C/MU-1, C/MU-2, and C/MU-3 zones and states that 1 space per 500 gross SF of commercial space would be required for this project as it is proposing 777 square feet of commercial space. The applicant has requested a waiver of the commercial parking requirement per California State Density Bonus Law (Government Code Section 65915(e)(1)) stating that the required parking spaces would physically preclude the construction of the development at the densities permitted.

Electric Vehicle ready spaces will be provided as required per energy code.

Trash enclosure: A enclosed trash, recycling, and organics enclosure would be situated on the southeastern side of the property. Waste, recycling, and organics pick-up would occur from the existing alley on the eastern portion of the site.





NIGHT VIEW FROM NORTHWEST

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NIGHT VIEW FROM SOUTHEAST

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### **Design Review Board:**

The Design Review Board reviewed the project on June 15, 2023, and recommended approval of the project's design with a vote of 3-1 (1 member absent, see Attachment 3) with the following conditions:

- Add additional outdoor communal space for the health of the community
- Create negative space on the north and east facing walls
- Install bike storage for the commercial space
- Consider the residential location of the project and incorporate more screening for the privacy of the neighbors and more beautiful landscaping (not DG and decorative pebble) that the residents could enjoy
- If DG is used, to use DG with bio-additives to breakdown pet waste
- Replace wood fencing with CMU wall for longevity and security
- Install bollards and CMU wall for the three open parking spaces
- Lower the lighting on Northwest and Southeast elevation to the side of the doors so there is no spillage into the adjacent property.
- Use warmer tones to soften the institutional appearance of the building
- In the Northwest corner the DG space be used for storage space for residents
- Reconsider the decorative pebble and consider the utilization of artificial turf or similar material to incorporate landscaping
- Use planters on the West elevation or a green wall to soften institutional appearance.
- Use permanent low wall to screen the SDG&E box in the front yard
- Change tree species from desert museum trees to more vertical and evergreen, for lower maintenance and less blockage of views.
- Recommend using Brisbane Box or Sweet Shade trees
- Add verbiage to irrigation plans that the auxiliary equipment is not visible from the property line
- Should the artwork not be used where designated to consider a green wall treatment on East elevation
- For any future solar equipment provide concealed infrastructure to avoid the need for surface mounted conduit
- Consider the use of larger materials that are more aesthetically pleasing in the areas that are not walkways and are currently DG
- Monitoring of Transportation Demand Management Strategies
- Include condition of approval related to coordinating with the neighbors related to the design of the fencing
- Solicit input from neighbors regarding material to be used for the fence in front of the 3 open parking spaces, however, the safety component must be considered

### **General Plan Consistency:**

The project is located in the C/MU-1 (General Commercial & Mixed Use) Zone. The purpose of the C/MU-1 Zone is to provide land to meet the local demand for commercial goods and services required primarily by the community. It is intended that the dominant type of commercial activity in the C/MU-1 Zone will be community and neighborhood serving retail and office uses such as retail stores and offices. The proposed vertical mixed-use project meets the purpose and intent of the land use designation.



Zoning Chart:

C/MU-1 Standards	Provided/Proposed
<p>Yard requirements for the C/MU-1 zone are as follows:</p> <p>A. Front Yard. Zero feet; up to forty percent of the project frontage may be set back up to an additional five feet. Front yards facing Donax Avenue or Calla Avenue shall be a minimum of fifteen feet.</p> <p>B. Side Yard. There shall be a minimum side yard of five feet.</p> <p>C. Rear Yard. There shall be a minimum rear yard of ten feet.</p>	<p>A. The project, including the commercial component, fronts Calla Avenue and is set back 15'. It is intended that the street exterior wall features, such as variations in building colors, window glazing, and landscaping areas along the street contribute to and enhance the active commercial use area. IBMC Section 19.04.017 defines active commercial uses as those that generate/contribute to a high level of pedestrian activity, sidewalk traffic, and active streets.</p> <p>B. The side yards of the project abut residential properties to the east and west. The project provides the minimum 5' setback along the east property line with additional setbacks of up to 13' 11 1/2". In accordance with California State Density Bonus Law, the applicant is requesting an incentive for a reduced side yard setback to 0' along portions of the west property line.</p> <p>C. The rear yard of the project abuts an alley. In accordance with California State Density Bonus Law, the applicant is requesting an incentive for a reduced rear yard setback to 3'.</p>

D. The open space and landscaping requirements as stated in Chapter 19.50 of this code shall be met.	D. 15% of the site must be landscaped, and 17% is provided.
“Active Commercial Uses” as defined in Chapter 19.05 are required for all buildings with frontage along Palm Avenue at a minimum of 60% of each building’s ground floor lineal footage, have direct pedestrian access from the Palm Avenue sidewalk or a plaza, and have a minimum building depth of twenty-five feet. The remaining forty percent must either be primarily related to the commercial use, such as parking, access, or other non-active commercial purpose or, if related to non-commercial use, must be designed either to encourage and promote pedestrian activity or to visually screen required on-site parking (Section 19.26.020.A.1).	The project is not fronting Palm Avenue, and as such is not required to provide an active commercial use. However, the applicant has provided a commercial space fronting Calla Avenue to promote pedestrian activity and enhance the adjacent commercial corridor.
For property with a side or rear yard abutting a residential zone, the second floor shall be set back a minimum of five feet from the abutting residential property line and the third floor shall be set back a minimum of ten feet from the abutting residential property line. (Section 19.26.041)	The property does not abut a residential zone on the side or rear yards.
Minimum lot size of 3,000 square-feet (Section 19.26.050).	The lot size measures 7,034 square feet. The project does not propose to create a new lot.
Minimum street frontage of 30 feet (Section 19.26.060).	The Calla Avenue frontage is approximately 50.03’. The project does not propose to create a new lot.
Maximum building height of four stories or 40 feet (Section 19.26.070).	<p>The overall height of the building, including the roof decks, parapets, and elevator structure, is approximately 41.17’, however, roof structures for the housing of equipment required to maintain and operate the building and parapet walls required by law may extend above the height limit (ref. IBMC Section 19.40.020). Exclusive of the portions of the structure that may extend above the height limit, the building height is 39.17’ on the northern portion of the structure and 32.92’ on the southern portion of structure, which complies with the building height requirements in the C/MU-1 General Commercial and Mixed-Use Zone.</p> <p>The applicant would be required to show conformance with the height</p>

	requirements as required by IBMC 19.04.400.
All commercial spaces on the ground floor shall have a minimum fifteen-foot floor-to-ceiling height; and single-story commercial buildings shall have a minimum building height of twenty feet. (Section 19.27.070).	The project is proposing a floor-to-ceiling height of 15' 10 1/2" for the ground floor commercial space.
No buildings shall be located less than five feet from any other building on the same lot. (Section 19.26.080)	No buildings shall be located less than five feet from any other building on the same lot.
<p>Landscaping requirements are as follows (Section 19.50.030, Commercial Landscaping):</p> <p>A. Not less than fifteen percent of the total site shall be landscaped and permanently maintained.</p> <p>B. There shall be a five-foot-wide landscape area between any parking area and any public street right-of-way.</p> <p>C. A portion of a property not used for buildings, parking, walkways, loading or storage areas shall be landscaped.</p>	<p>A. The 7,034 square foot lot requires a minimum of 1,055 square feet of landscaping on the site (15%). The project proposes to provide 1,207 square feet of landscaping on the ground level along the property's perimeters totaling to (17%) of site as planted landscaping at grade. The landscaping would include various shrubs, succulents, groundcovers, accent boulders, and a tree. In addition, the development proposes permeable pavers for three of the six parking spaces provided and three new trees would be planted in the parkway adjacent to the property as part of the project.</p> <p>B. There is no parking area near the public right-of-way.</p> <p>C. Portions of a property not used for buildings, parking, walkways, loading or storage are landscaped.</p>

<p>D. There shall be a minimum three-foot by fifteen-foot, or forty-five square foot, landscaped area within the parking area (not including perimeter area landscaping) for every three parking spaces or the equivalent. A minimum width of three feet is required. A four-foot by fifteen-foot area may be permitted for every four spaces, five-foot-wide for five spaces, etc.</p> <p>E. Prior to issuance of any building permits, a complete landscaping plan shall be submitted to the Community Development Department for approval. Such approval shall be subject to appeal in the manner set forth in Sections 19.84.070 through 19.84.090.</p> <p>F. Landscaping and required watering system shall be installed prior to the use of the premises. All landscaping material in required landscaping areas shall be permanently maintained in a growing and healthy condition, including trimming, as appropriate to the landscaping material.</p> <p>A permanent irrigation system shall be installed to serve all landscaped areas.</p>	<p>D. The project provides adequate landscaping in the surface parking spaces.</p> <p>E. A complete landscape plan would be required prior to issuance of building permits.</p> <p>F. Landscaping and required watering system shall be installed prior to the use of the premises subject to state requirements.</p> <p>A permanent irrigation system shall be installed to serve all landscaped areas subject to state requirements.</p>
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Surrounding Land Use and Zoning:

Surrounding Areas	Surrounding Zoning	Surrounding Land Use
North	R-2000 (Medium-Density Residential)	Residential
South	C/MU-1 (General Commercial & Mixed-Use)	Semi-Public
East	C/MU-1 (General Commercial & Mixed-Use)	Residential
West	C/MU-1 (General Commercial & Mixed-Use)	Residential

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:**

This project may be categorically exempt pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15332 Class 32 (In-fill Development Projects).



**COASTAL JURISDICTION:**

This project is located in the coastal zone as defined by the California Coastal Act of 1976. The City Council public hearing will serve as the required coastal permit hearing and the City Council will consider the findings under the California Coastal Act. Pursuant to the City of Imperial Beach Zoning Ordinance Section 19.87.050, review of the proposal will consider whether the proposed development satisfies the required findings prior to the approval and issuance of a Coastal Development Permit. The project is not located in the Appeal Jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission as indicated on the Local Coastal Program Post Certification and Appeal Jurisdiction Map and, as such, would not be appealable to the California Coastal Commission under Section 30603(a) of the California Public Resources Code.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. ATT 1 – Resolution No. 2023-68
2. ATT 2 – Project Plans, Landscape Plan, Materials Board
3. ATT 3 – Design Review Minutes 061523
4. ATT 4 – Project Renderings
5. ATT 5 – Applicant Response Letter