



Memorandum

Date: May 20, 2025	
To: Brian Froelich, AICP	Organization: City of Capitola
From: RRM Design Group	Title: Design Review Team
Project Name: Capitola On-Call Architectural and Landscape Review	Project Number: 1783-10-PP24
Topic: 2178 41 st Avenue Review	

Dear Brian,

We have reviewed the proposed design for compliance with Section 17.120.070 – Design Review Criteria, found within the City of Capitola Municipal Code.

Project documents reviewed include the 2178 41st Ave. Capitola-Drawings Set in 10 pages; Site Plan, Sheet SDI; Site Lighting Photometric, Sheet SDI-L; Site Details, Sheet SD2; Landscape Plan, Sheet LAI; Topographic Survey, Sheet 1 of 1; Preliminary Grading and Utility Plan, Sheet 1 of 2; Stormwater Control Plan, Sheet 2 of 2; Floor Plan, Sheet A1.1; Roof Plan, Sheet A1.5; Exterior Elevations, Sheet A2.1.

Neighborhood Character and Patterns

According to the City of Capitola Zoning Map, the project site is zoned Regional Commercial (C-R). The parcel currently contains an existing convenience store and covered gas pumps and is located along 41st Avenue, within an existing commercial context. The area immediately surrounding the project site is characterized by a variety of commercial and residential land uses, including Regional Commercial (C-R) parcels to the north, Regional Commercial (C-R) parcels to the south, Single-Family Residential (R-1) parcels to the east, and Regional Commercial (C-R) parcels to the west across 41st Avenue.

Project Design Review

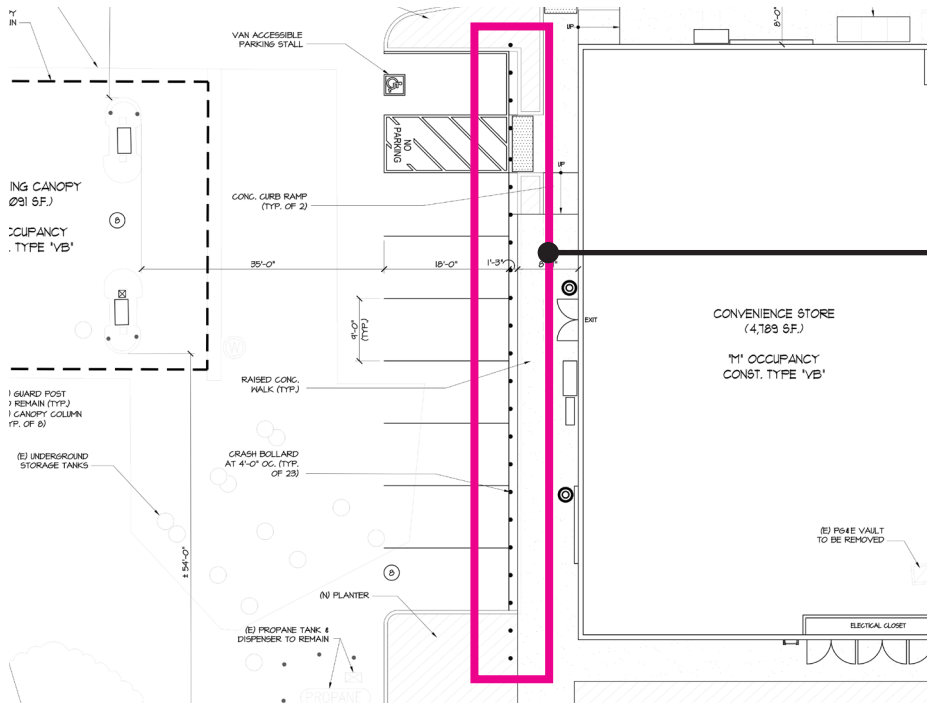
The project proposal consists of demolishing the existing convenience store and constructing a new, 4,189 square foot convenience store. The existing canopy covering the gas pumps will be maintained and is not part of the project review. The proposed convenience store's architectural style most closely resembles a "Contemporary" architectural style. The proposed projects architectural style will be referred to as "Contemporary" going forward within this review.



Project Location

Site Planning

Site planning involves an understanding of appropriate building placement and configuration, but also the consideration of topography, surrounding uses, landscape design, adjacent uses, hardscape, and parking. The project proposes to demolish the existing convenience store and construct a new, larger convenience store pushed closer to the rear property line. The existing drive aisles and parking spaces will be re-organized and re-striped to accommodate the new convenience store location. Adequate on-site pedestrian pathways are provided that connect the primary entrance to the public sidewalk via a striped crosswalk and raised private walkway running along the northern property line. The applicant successfully provided new planter areas with landscaping near the parking spaces adjacent to the proposed convenient store entrance that enhance the overall site appearance. The applicant may consider reducing the number of bollards located between the proposed parking spaces and walkway running along the primary entrance or alternatively incorporating wheel-stops to avoid the need for the large amount of bollards currently shown.

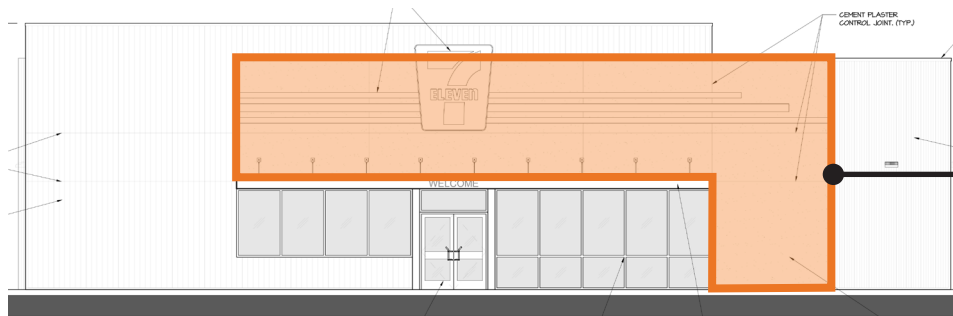


Consider replacing bollards with wheel-stops or reducing number of bollards to improve the physical appearance of the proposed structure from the public realm.

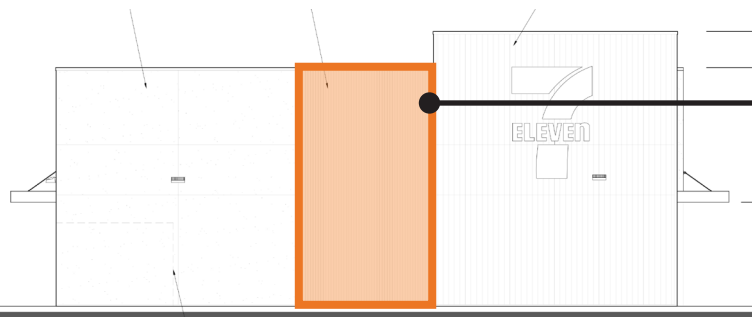
Site Plan

Architecture

Building massing, or the way the building is sized and appears, is a primary and important component of building design. In review of the elevations provided on Sheet A2.1, the applicant has incorporated minimal massing strategies to remove the current “box-like” appearance of the proposed structure. The west elevation provides variation in massing through a change in wall plane height and the applicant may consider a similar strategy on the east elevation facing single-family residential uses to further improve the projects appearance to neighboring dwelling units (CMC 17.120.070 B). Additionally, the applicant may consider furring-out wall planes more than 6 inches when transitioning materials to ensure all materials terminate at-inside corners and further break-up the proposed structure on all elevations (CMC 17.120.070 H).



West Elevation

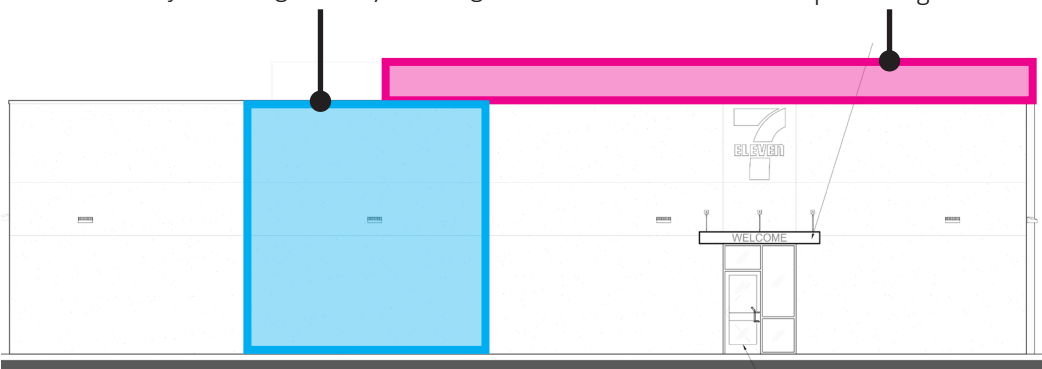


Explore projecting wall planes more than 6 inches when transitioning between materials to ensure material transitions occur at inside corners to remove a tacked on appearance and further break up the proposed structure.

South Elevation

Incorporate an additional color or material on the east elevation to further articulate the elevation and improve the view for adjacent single-family dwellings.

Reduce the “box-like” appearance through the addition of a change in wall plane height on the east elevation, similar to the change in wall plane height shown on the west elevation.



East Elevation

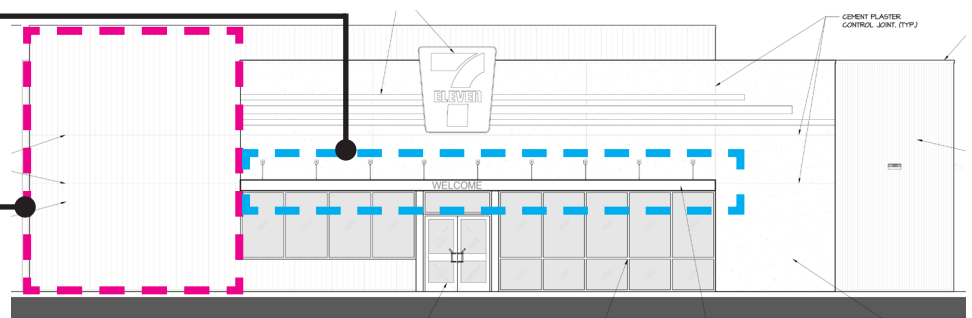
Articulation represents change in the form of a building expressed through proportion, details, wall plane changes, heights, and other design elements. The applicant has adequately articulated the west elevation of the proposed structure through the application of differentiation in colors and materials and incorporation of a stylistically consistent awning defining the primary entry. However, the applicant should explore opportunities to carry the articulation strategies onto the east elevation to remove the blank wall appearance facing the single-family dwellings (CMC 17.120.070 J).

Roof forms are critical elements in providing visual interest within a project and reinforcing architectural style. The applicant is proposing to use a flat roof style with 3'-3" parapet to introduce variation in the roof line appearance, generally considered consistent with the proposed architectural style. To establish a sense of variation along the east elevation roof line, the applicant may consider incorporating parapet, similar to the usage on the west elevation, to break up the current monotonous appearance of the unbroken roof line.

A primary entry contributes to the overall identity of a building by defining the architectural style and engaging with the public realm. The primary entry is provided on the street facing west elevation, defined by a covered awning and surrounded by large transparent windows. While the applicant has begun to define the primary entry, the project design could benefit from further accentuation of the canopy through enlargement or further incorporation of the canopy into the proposed signage, similar to the design interventions shown on 7/11's reflecting the updated architectural corporate branding. Alternatively, the applicant may consider relocating and enlarging the 7/11 sign to the open space shown on the left side of the elevation to establish a connection with the public realm and improve the project design.

Further enhance the primary entry and west elevation through accentuation of the proposed canopy.

Alternatively, relocate the 7/11 sign to enhance the overall elevation.



West Elevation



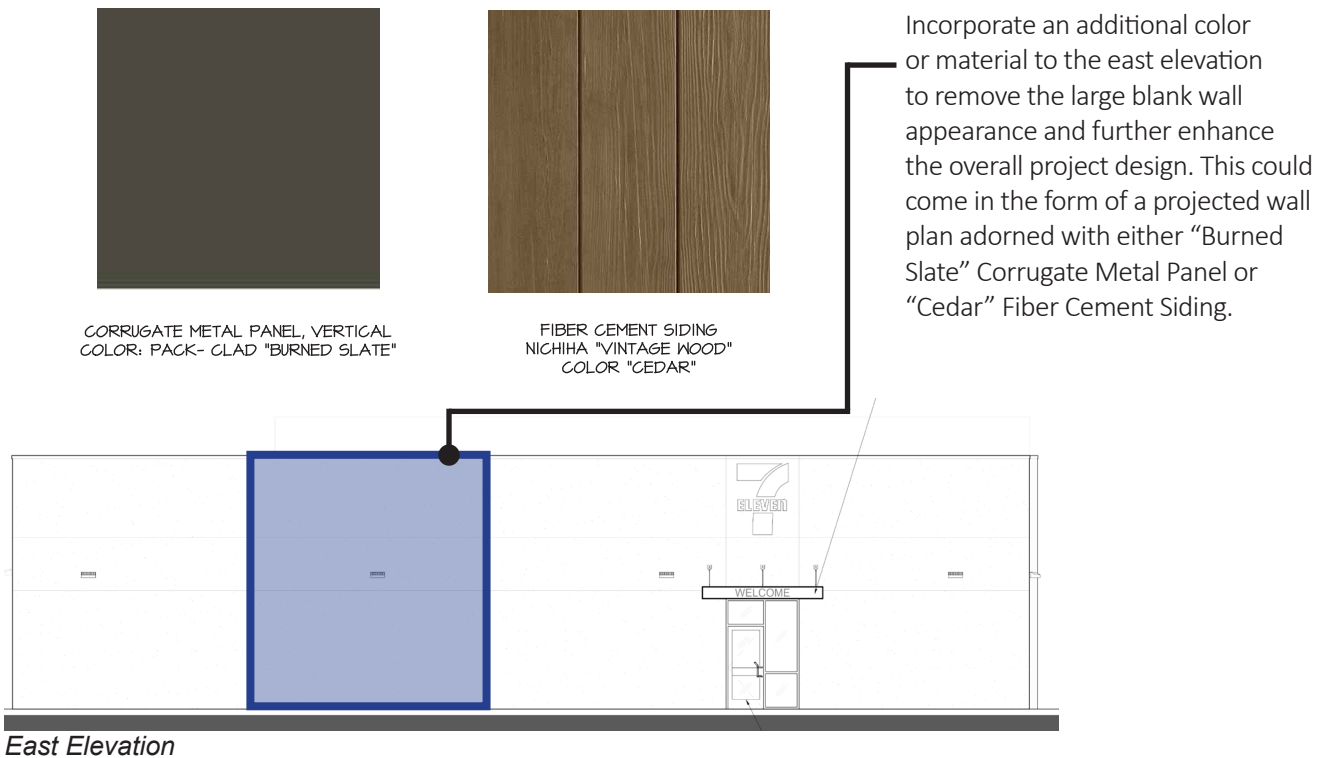
Example of Alternative Placement of 7/11 Sign to Enhance the Overall Elevation with a Stylistic Design.



7/11 Primary Entry Example with Signage and Canopy Integrated to Clearly Define the Primary Entry to Patrons and Windows Applied Above the Canopy to Provide Further Transparency.

Windows and doors help define an architectural style and add visual interest to a buildings design. The applicant is proposing Clear Glass and Black Aluminum Storefront Doors and Black Aluminum Storefront windows, considered consistent with the proposed Contemporary architectural style. To further enhance the street facing west elevation, the applicant may explore the possibility of applying windows above the proposed awning to establish transparency and elevate the project design.

Colors and materials demonstrate aspects of articulation and complement architectural detail to emphasize a selected architectural style. According to the colors and materials board provided, the applicant is proposing usage of the following colors and materials: “Versatile Gray” Cement Plaster Finish; “Burned Slate” Corrugate Metal Panel; “Matte Black” Aluminum Fascia Awning; “Coal Black” Pre-Finish Metal Coping; “Cedar” Fiber Cement Siding; “Tricorn Black” Exterior Roof Access Ladder. The applicant successfully incorporated several colors and materials on the west, north, and south elevations, however, the applicant should incorporate an additional color or material on the east elevation to avoid the appearance of a large blank stucco box facing the single-family dwellings to the east (CMC 17.120.070 K). Potential solutions to improve the east elevation could include incorporating a furred-out wall plane along the right-hand side of the elevation donned with the “Burned Slate” Corrugate Metal Panel or “Cedar” Fiber Cement Siding.



General Comments

The proposed plans indicate the applicant intends to maintain the current appearance of the existing gas-pump canopy. However, the applicant should consider applying the 7/11 branding to the existing canopy to be consistent with the proposed convenient store and further align the accessory structure with the primary structure.

The applicant may consider removing or modifying the location of the internally lit signage along the east elevation as this sign directly faces the adjacent single-family dwellings.

Design Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to better respond to the proposed “Contemporary” architectural style and to enhance the overall project design.

Site Planning

1. Consider replacing the large amount of bollards situated between the parking spaces and primary entrance walkway with wheel-stops.

Architecture

2. Consider applying a change in wall plane height on the east elevation to provide variation and break up the current “box-like” appearance.
3. Consider furring-out wall planes more than 6 inches when transitioning materials to ensure all materials terminate at inside corners and further break-up the proposed structure on all elevations (CMC 17.120.070 H).
4. Explore opportunities to carry the articulation strategies depicted on the west elevation onto the east elevation to remove the large blank wall currently visible from adjacent single-family dwellings (CMC 17.120.070 J).
5. Consider incorporating the parapet shown on the west elevation, onto the east elevation, to establish a change in roof line and create a sense of variation.
6. Explore ways to further accentuate the primary entrance to increase visibility from the public realm. This could come in the form of incorporating the entry canopy with the 7/11 signage to further define the primary entry or relocate the 7/11 to open space on the left side of the elevation and enlarging the sign.
7. Consider applying additional windows above the primary entry canopy to increase transparency and establish a connection with the public realm.
8. Revise the east elevation by removing the current depiction of a large blank wall facing the adjacent single-family dwellings by applying additional colors or materials such as the “Burned Slate Corrugate Metal Panel or “Cedar” Fiber Cement Siding (CMC 17.120.070 K).

Overall, we feel the applicant has proposed a project that is appropriate to the location and surrounding context of the site. However, as addressed above, we have a number of concerns regarding site planning, massing, articulation, primary entries, and materials/colors, among others, that will have to be adequately addressed by the applicant to ensure a project that appropriately reflects the existing neighborhood context while also being consistent with City’s desire for high quality new developments.

Very truly yours,

RRM Design Group