



STAFF REPORT 3/7/2022

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Gabriel Perez, Development Services Director

SUBJECT: Architectural Review No. 21-12 (Amendment) Modification to Conditions of Approval related to screening of rooftop-mounted equipment of the proposed 20,442 sq. ft. Aldi Supermarket building on 1.94 acres at the northeast corner of Cesar Chavez Street and First Street (APN# 778-020-007 and 778-010-017). Applicant: Coachella Retail Realty Associates, LP.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

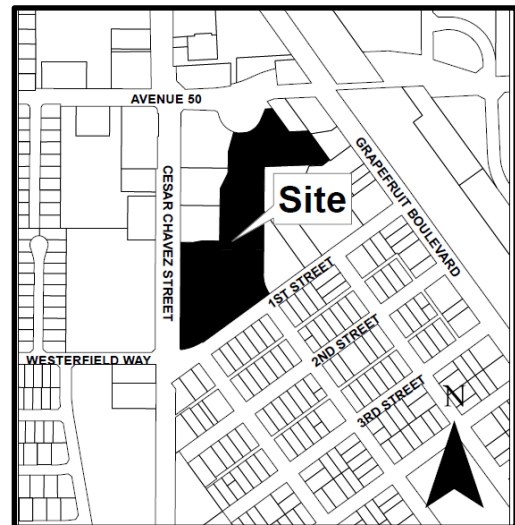
Coachella Retail Realty Associates, LP requests Planning Commission approval of modifications to the conditions approval related to rooftop mounted equipment screening of the 20,442 sq. ft. Aldi supermarket. The applicant also requests the Planning Commission recommend approval of a revision to Tentative Parcel Map 37940 to accommodate parking for the Aldi supermarket on 1.94 acres located at the northeast corner of Cesar Chavez Street and First Street.

BACKGROUND:

On December 15, 2021, the Planning Commission considered the proposed project at the southerly portion of the Fountainhead Plaza commercial center at the corner of Cesar Chavez Street and Frist Street and approved the development of the proposed 2,600 sq. ft. Panda Express drive thru restaurant and a 20,442 sq. ft. Aldi supermarket with Type 20 Alcohol Sales (Off-Sale Beer and Wine) on January 5, 2022.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The proposed development is a development of the originally entitled project CUP No. 233 and Architectural Review (AR) 07-20. The surrounding land uses and zoning designations are as follows:



- North:** Existing commercial development, America's Tire (C-G, General Commercial).
- South:** Existing single family residences across First St. (R-S, Single Family Residential).

East: Foster-Gardner agricultural products (nonconforming) industrial site (C-G, General Commercial).

West: Existing commercial development across Harrison Street (C-G, General Commercial).

Architectural Design

The overall architectural design Aldi incorporates modern architectural design with distinct material and color patterns for each buildings that differ from the original architectural conceptual design of Fountainhead Plaza as characterized by the Spanish Colonial revival appearance of the Walgreens drug store building.

Aldi Supermarket

The Aldi building uses modern architecture consisting of CMU block, cement panels, clear glass metal trellises and aluminum composite panels (Attachment 6). The front elevation of Aldi is west-facing towards Cesar Chavez Street. This elevation consists of a tower element, 30'9" at the highest point, consisting of aluminum composite panels (ACP), a covered walkway with ACP panels, and a storefront window system. The largest expanse of the elevation is comprised of a CMU and cement panel system with a finished metal cap. Two narrow horizontal clear glass areas are provided on this elevation. The truck loading area is located toward the north end of this elevation and a metal trellis has been added to provide visual relief.

The side elevations facing First Street is the elevation with the highest quality architectural design with a large modern sloping roof feature consisting of an ACP panels system, combination fiber cement panel and CMU wall system, aluminum canopy extending over pedestrian walkways and building entrance. The rear wall is largely a blank expanse of CMU block with a singular color and visibility of the back of the tower element.

Aldi Rooftop-mounted Equipment

The front building walls proposed in AR 21-12 do not fully screen rooftop mechanical equipment and instead a Roof Top Unit (RTU), which extends approximately 1 foot above the roof height, screens the HVAC equipment. Commercial developments are consistently conditioned to screen rooftop-mounted equipment by a parapet wall greater than the height of the equipment installed. This condition was included in AR No. 21-12 (Condition of Approval No. 72 and 73)) and rooftop screening by the building parapet is characteristic of all the existing buildings (Walgreens, McDonalds, Taco Bell) within Fountainhead Plaza. Parapet walls are higher than rooftop-mounted equipment on approved elevation plans for Starbuck and Panda Express buildings. Conditions No. 72 and 73 requires Aldi to amend their building elevation plans so that rooftop-mounted equipment does not exceed the height of the building parapet walls.

The applicant requests to maintain current Aldi elevation designs as they content that the rooftop-mounted equipment would not be visible to the public at ground level from various vantage point and therefore achieves the City's goals of screening rooftop equipment. The applicant believes that the rooftop-mounted screening requirements of the Conditions of Approval No. 72 and 73 of Resolution No. 2021-25 are too restrictive and requests they be amended as follows:

Resolution 2021-25 Approved Conditions of Approval (72 and 73):

72. All roof mounted mechanical equipment shall be view obscured by a parapet wall greater in height than the equipment installed. Ground mounted mechanical equipment shall be view obscured by landscaping or enclosure. Roof Top Unit (RTU) screens shall not satisfy this condition for roof mounted equipment screening.

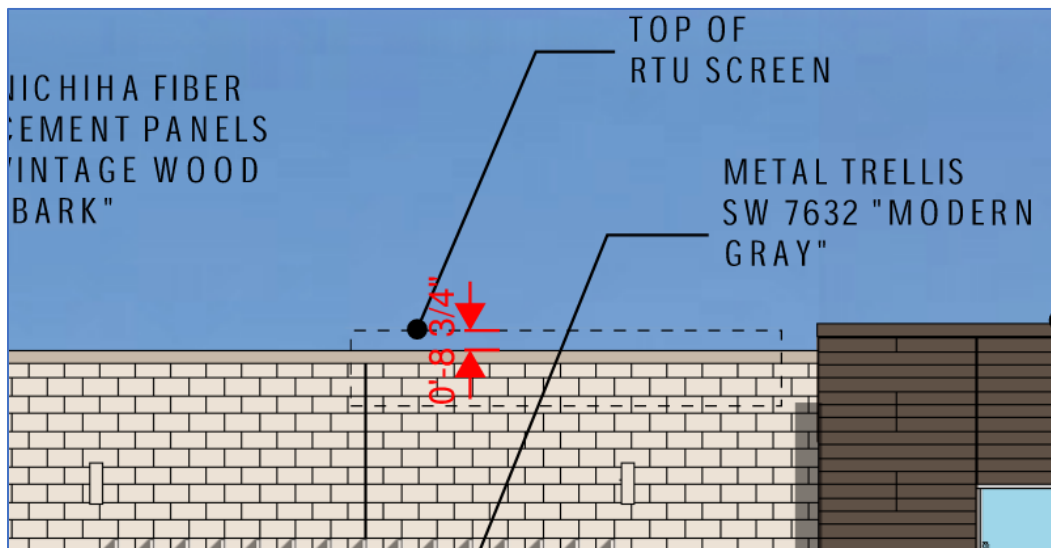
73. The Aldi supermarket elevation plans shall be revised demonstrating that rooftop equipment is not visible above exterior wall parapets. All elevations of Aldi supermarket shall include exterior wall parapets that view obscure roof mounted mechanical equipment.

Requested Modification to Conditions of Approval (72 and 73) strikeout for proposed deleted text and requested added text in bold:

72. All roof mounted mechanical equipment shall be view obscured by a parapet wall greater in height than the equipment installed **with the exception of the Aldi building, where roof top units shall not be visible from the adjacent roadways per line of sight exhibit.** Ground mounted mechanical equipment shall be view obscured by landscaping or enclosure. Roof Top Unit (RTU) screens shall not satisfy this condition for roof mounted equipment screening.

73. The Aldi supermarket elevation plans shall be revised demonstrating that ~~rooftop equipment is not visible above exterior wall parapets~~ **roof top units shall not be visible from the adjacent roadways per line of sight exhibit.** All elevations of Aldi supermarket shall include exterior wall parapets that view obscure roof mounted mechanical equipment **from the adjacent roadways per line of sight exhibit.**

Figure 1: Front elevation showing RTU visible above Aldi building parapet wall



The Condition of Approval modification requested by the applicant would allow Aldi supermarket to maintain the rooftop-mounted equipment at a height 1 foot above the parapet wall, insofar as the equipment is not visible to a person at ground level. The applicant provided a sight line study to demonstrate that a person at ground level would not be able to view the rooftop equipment from

a distance of 327' away from the Aldi building along Cesar Chavez Street (Attachment 7). The sight line study also shows that rooftop equipment would be screened from other ground level vantage points at distances beyond 200 feet from the Aldi building. A separate sight line study was prepared for the approval of the Walgreens commercial building to demonstrate that rooftop equipment would be screened from vehicle and pedestrian traffic crossing the Avenue 50 bridge, which is at a higher elevation than the Fountainhead Plaza (Attachment 8).

In a review of other recently constructed Southern California Aldi supermarket locations, the level of screening of rooftop-mounted equipment varies as explained below:

- Aldi in the City of Murrieta (39025 Date St) – Parapet walls are higher than Rooftop-mounted equipment which screen equipment even from higher elevations North on Winchester Road.
- Aldi in the City of Perris (80 Citrus Ave) – Parapet walls are lower than the RTU unit surrounding the rooftop-mounted equipment at rear or side elevations. The architectural plans presented in a staff report to the City of Perris Planning Commission did not show rooftop-mounted equipment higher than the parapet wall.
- Aldi in the City of San Jacinto (1667 S. San Jacinto Ave) – Parapet walls are lower than the rooftop-mounted equipment. About 2-3 feet of the rooftop equipment is visible from ground level at San Jacinto Avenue Arterial Road.
- Aldi in the City of La Quinta (78601 Highway 111) – Parapet walls are higher than rooftop-mounted equipment and is not visible from any vantage point including at ground level at Highway 111.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONSIDERATION

The Planning Commission adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration as part of Environmental Initial Study (EIS 07-16) on May 7, 2008 for the Fountainhead Plaza for all phases of the project. Staff determined that the proposed development and modifications will not result in any new environmental effects that were not previously analyzed as part of the original project. As such, no additional environmental review or further mitigation is required for this request.

ALTERNATIVES:

- 1) Adopt Resolution No. PC 2022-05 approving an amendment to Architectural Review No. 21-12 (Aldi) by modifying conditions of approval nos. 72 and 73 (Resolution No. PC 2021-25) with the findings and conditions.
- 2) Adopt Resolution No. PC 2022-06, denying the requested modification to conditions 72 and 73.
- 3) Continue this item and provide staff and the applicant with direction.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE(S):

Staff recommends alternative #2.

Attachments:

1. PC Resolution No. 2022-05 for AR No. 21-12 Amendment Exhibit A – Modified Conditions of Approval for AR No. 21-12
2. PC Resolution No. 2022-06 for AR No. 21-12 Amendment
3. Approved PC Resolution No. 2021-25 (Aldi Supermarket and Panda Express)
4. Vicinity Map
5. Site Plan
6. Architectural Plans – Aldi Supermarket (AR No. 21-12)
7. Sight line Study – Aldi Supermarket
8. Sight line Study – Walgreens (2008)
9. Photos of other Aldi Locations
10. Planning Commission Meeting Staff Report January 5, 2022