



REPORT to the LA MESA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

DATE: May 12, 2025

SUBJECT: PROJECT NUMBER 2022-1599 (CALI QUESO CORP) –
DESIGN REVIEW CONSIDERATION FOR A DRIVE-
THRU RESTAURANT AT 8303 PARKWAY DRIVE, APN
490-592-04-00 AND 490-592-02-00 IN THE C-G-D
(GENERAL COMMERCIAL/ GROSSMONT OVERLAY/
URBAN DESIGN OVERLAY) ZONE

ISSUING DEPARTMENT: Community Development

SUMMARY:

Issue(s):

Does the proposed design meet the intent of the Urban Design Program policies and the Grossmont Specific Plan?

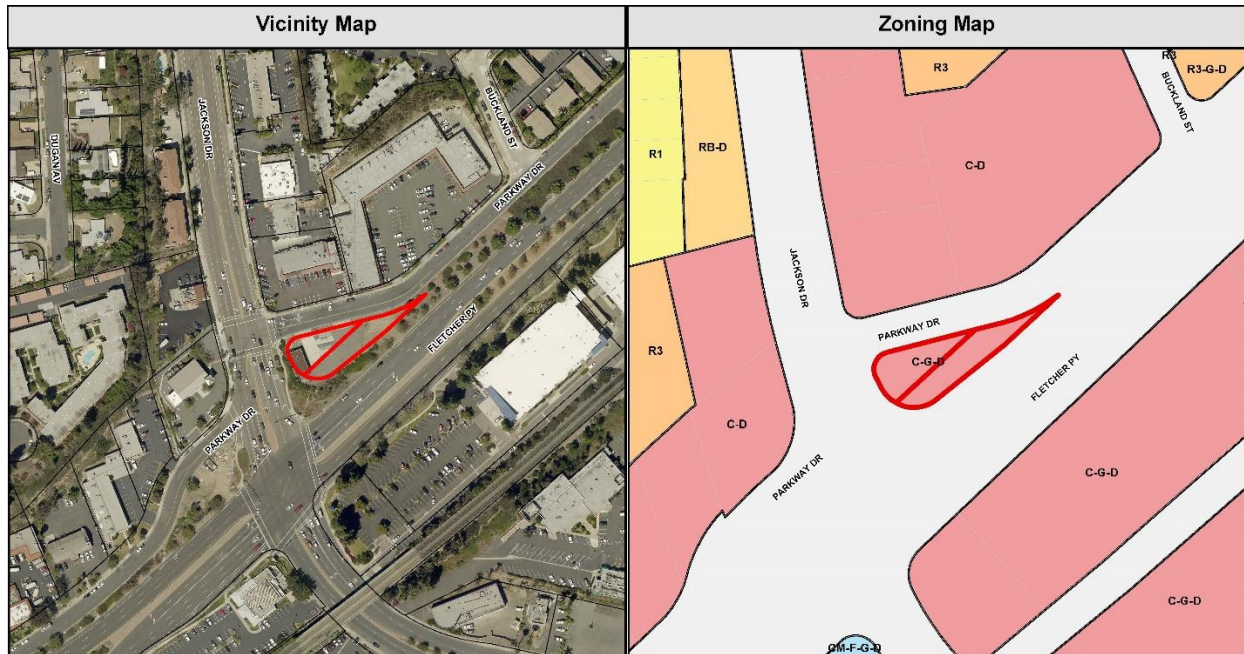
Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Design Review Board approve the project, subject to City Council ratification (**Attachment A**).

BACKGROUND:

The 0.39 project site is comprised of two lots located at 8303 Parkway Drive, bounded by Jackson Drive to the west, Parkway Drive to the north, and Fletcher Parkway to the south as seen on the vicinity map. The lot is triangular and resembles the shape of a tear drop. The property is currently developed with a vacant commercial building and associated parking lot. A City of San Diego water main pipeline runs underneath the project site, and a City of San Diego no-build easement is located on the entirety of the southern property for the existing water main pipeline. The City of San Diego has reviewed the project and provided a letter noting their approval of the conceptual design (**Attachment B**). In order to build within the easement, the City of San Diego will require that an Encroachment Maintenance Removal Agreement (EMRA) be executed upon project approval by the City of La Mesa. Existing right-of-way improvements along Parkway Drive and Jackson Drive include sidewalk, curb, gutter, streetlights, traffic stoplights, and two curb openings. Right-

of-way improvements along Fletcher Parkway include curb, gutter, streetlights, and a large, landscaped area. Photos of the project site are provided as **Attachment C**.



Zoning for the project site is C-G-D (General Commercial/ Grossmont Specific Plan Overlay/ Urban Design Overlay) zone, and the General Plan planned land use designation is Regional Serving Commercial. General Commercial zoning is generally applied along major streets and in shopping centers and provides areas in which all types of retail businesses, offices, and services can be conducted. Surrounding development includes commercial uses and shopping centers to the north, southeast, and west.

The Grossmont Specific Plan states that all new projects within the Specific Plan area requires Site Development Plan review by the Planning Commission and Design Review through the Design Review Board and City Council. The Grossmont Specific Plan and the City's Urban Design Program prescribe urban design principles to new projects that are located within the subject overlay zones. Project entitlement consists of Site Development Plan review by the Planning Commission, Lot Consolidation review by the Director of Community Development, and Design Review by the Design Review Board, subject to City Council ratification.

DISCUSSION:

The property owner (Applicant) proposes to demolish existing on-site improvements to construct a one-story, 1,903 square foot (s.f.) drive-thru restaurant, with a new parking lot, paving, and pedestrian access as shown on the project plans provided as **Attachment D**. A color and materials board is included as **Attachment E**. It appears that the project

meets underlying development standards of the C zone, including but not limited to setbacks, height, and parking. Additionally, the Applicant provided the City with written consent from the City of San Diego verifying that the proposed site design and improvements across their easements is permitted.

The intent of the Urban Design Program is to use the guidelines as an instrument to give direction and support to the Design Review Board and the Applicant in their designs and assure a minimum level of design quality for site design and architectural design. The Urban Design Program's Community Image Diagram designates the intersection located adjacent to the project site as a node, a strategic spot in the city into which an observer can enter, and which are the intensive foci to and from which they are traveling. The Urban Design Program also identifies the portion of Fletcher Parkway along the project site as one of four major circulation corridors in the City.

Similarly, the Grossmont Specific Plan includes special urban design principles for projects within the Specific Plan area to support projects to exhibit superior design principles in both site and architectural design for this key commercial node in the City. The project appears to meet the intent of both the Urban Design Program and Grossmont Overlay Zone through the project's site design and architectural design as further discussed below.

URBAN DESIGN PROGRAM SITE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Site Design

The Urban Design Program finds that building location and orientation, buffering and screening, circulation, refuse considerations, and lighting all contribute to a desirable site design for commercial projects. The proposed project meets these considerations as follows:

- The project meets guidelines for building orientation and location by siting the building near the street, and the major intersection, rather than behind the parking lot. The building is setback approximately 12 – 15 feet away from the north and west property lines, with the drive-thru portion located within the setback. The parking lot is proposed along the southeast portion of the site, further from the intersection.
- The project will be buffered by landscaping along the perimeter of the site. This meets the Urban Design Program by creating a buffer to separate the vehicular circulation from the pedestrian circulation within the right-of-way. Within the project site, handicap accessible walkways are included and provide connection from the street and the parking lot to the entrance of the building. Signs and painted arrows will provide patrons clearly defined directions for vehicular and pedestrian movements through the site. Clearly defined circulation patterns meet the Urban

Design Program by addressing pedestrian requirements and needs.

- The refuse container meets the requirements of the Urban Design Program by locating it away from the public street and building entrance and screening it with materials that are compatible with the building exterior.
- Exterior lighting was also considered as part of the architectural and landscape concept of the project. A combination of pole lights and wall packs are proposed on the site to illuminate building and sight entrances, walkways, and parking areas, and other areas of the site to enhance the building design and landscaping as well as provide for safety and security. The area lighting is predominantly down-directed and shielded which assists in avoiding glare or adverse spill-over of light off the site. The lighting plan and lighting fixture cut sheets are provided as **Attachment F**.

These considerations will reinforce and strengthen the streetscape, creating a pleasing transition that will provide for safer and more attractive walkways, parking and planting.

Landscape Design

A total of 20,401 s.f. of landscaping is proposed for the project, with 3,006 s.f. of landscaping located within the property lines (private property) and 17,395 s.f. of landscaping located within the public right-of-way. The applicant would be responsible for maintenance of the landscaping within the right-of-way and an EMRA with the City of La Mesa will be required to ensure ongoing maintenance of this area. 33 trees are proposed to line all three adjacent streets to create ample screening/buffering while enhancing the overall character of the streetscape. In addition, 7 trees are proposed on the subject property and surround the parking lot. These trees include a combination of accent and broad-spreading shade trees and are proposed together with accent plants and shrubs that were selected for low water use.

Off-Street Parking Design

The project includes 16 off-street parking spaces. The parking area includes interior and perimeter landscaping around the paved areas to meet the City's Parking and Landscape Standards. The project meets the Off-Street Parking Design Guidelines by providing concrete curbing around landscaped areas, striping and wheel stops, and use of compact parking spaces.

Energy Conservation

The project meets the Energy Conservation Guidelines through its site orientation, and landscaping. The orientation and siting of structures and landscaping consider water conservation, by management of water run-off and use of plant materials appropriate to the climate. The number of trees proposed for the project exceeds the CalGreen requirement for 50% shade coverage, which will lead to a decreased heat island effect

as the shade trees will cool the pavement below.

Safety Design

The Urban Design Program encourages the consideration of safety when designing a development in ways such as creating defensible spaces that clearly define physical spaces into areas of public, semi-public, semi-private, and private spaces. Along the street frontage of the project site, street trees and additional landscaping are proposed. The drive-thru lane sits between the public right-of-way landscaping, and the new building. The project meets the intent of the safety design guidelines through the use of space between the public right-of-way and private property, and creates a transition and symbolic barrier on the site. In addition, parking lot lighting is selected and oriented so that points and areas vulnerable to crime are accented.

To continue to provide sufficient, safe, and minimally disrupted walkways and traffic, the existing curb opening will remain unchanged. The internal site circulation will change due to the new building and addition of the drive thru. In order to address these internal circulation changes, a queuing analysis was submitted. The queuing analysis will be reviewed by the Planning Commission as part of the Site Development Plan review, and a condition of approval will be included to address offsite impacts due to queuing delays. Other public health, safety, and welfare findings and discussions will also be addressed as part of the Site Development Plan review, not the Design Review.

Major Circulation Corridor

The project site is located on the I-8/Fletcher Parkway corridor, which is considered a Major Circulation Corridor in the Urban Design Program. The project meets the Major Circulation Corridor guidelines through the use of landscaping, street trees, and pedestrian pathways along the right-of-way. By maintaining three of the existing jacaranda street trees along Fletcher Parkway, proposing additional flowering trees, and incorporating pine trees to create cohesion with the property to the south will strengthen the character and image of the corridor.

URBAN DESIGN PROGRAM ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

Architectural Design

The project meets the following Urban Design Program elements for architectural design: consistency, form and texture, human scale, neighborhood character, pedestrian interest, and rooftops. The proposed design for the building is modern. The variety in surface planes, forms, and textures appears to create variety and interest across all building elevations, while also creating consistency. Projecting canopies, and horizontal and vertical offsets create visual relief, while an interesting variety of window sizes and types

are organized into a regular pattern. These offsets and patterns contribute to the human scale, proportion, and massing of the building, which is consistent with the Urban Design Program. In addition, the rooftop mechanical equipment is screened by the building's parapet walls, and the proposed screening method is cohesive with the building's design. The neighborhood is commercial in character, and the proposed design is consistent with the character of the neighborhood.

Architectural Finish and Details

The proposed building utilizes a variety of colors and materials to create further visual interest. The project utilizes thin brick and EIFS (exterior insulation and finish systems) (similar to stucco) for the building's base surface materials, with metal canopies, composite wood, illumination panels, and cultered stone for the accent materials. Colors used in the design include orange, blue, black, gray, and chestnut. The combination of the neutral colors and the accent colors provides for a distinct color theme for the building that is cohesive with the branding of the proposed restaurant. The color scheme and proposed materials are consistent with the Urban Design Program Guidelines by providing visual interest and contrast, while not detracting from the surrounding neighborhood.

GROSSMONT SPECIFIC PLAN SITE AND BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Grossmont Specific Plan site and building design guidelines call to the importance of how the building interacts with the street since the area is part of a key commercial node in the City. In consideration of the guidelines, the project meets the intent by placing the building close to the major intersection, placing the parking away from the intersection, minimizing driveway openings, encouraging interconnecting on-site pedestrian and vehicular circulation patterns, providing landscaping and canopy trees throughout parking lots, and providing street trees. In addition, the Grossmont Specific Plan calls for new buildings to provide equal architectural relief and detailing on all building sides to achieve a more elevated design. The project provides a variety of color and materials, varying roof lines, and canopies across all building elevations in order to provide visual interest. By providing relatively equal amount of architectural relief, materials, and color across all building walls, the project meets the architectural design intent for the Grossmont Specific Plan.

CONCLUSION:

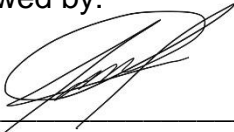
As discussed above, the project appears to meet the site design guidelines and architectural design guidelines of the Urban Design Program and Grossmont Specific Plan. Staff recommends that the Design Review Board approve Project 2022-1599, subject to City Council ratification.

Respectfully submitted by:

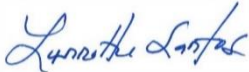


Laura Traffenstedt
Associate Planner

Reviewed by:



Staff Name
Assistant Director of Community Development



Lynnette Santos
Director of Community Development

Attachments:

- A. Draft Certificate of Action
- B. City of San Diego Approval Letter
- C. Site Photographs
- D. Project Plans
- E. Color and Materials Board
- F. Photometric Plan and Lighting Cut Sheets