



REPORT to the MAYOR and MEMBERS of the CITY COUNCIL
From the CITY MANAGER

DATE: April 14, 2026

SUBJECT: RATIFICATION OF THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD'S APPROVAL FOR FACADE REMODEL AT 8740-8748 LA MESA BOULEVARD, IN THE C-D-MU (GENERAL COMMERCIAL/URBAN DESIGN OVERLAY/MIXED USE OVERLAY) ZONE (APNs 494-213-13-00, 494-213-14-00 AND 494-213-15-00).

ISSUING DEPARTMENT: Community Development

Recommendation:

That the City Council ratify the Design Review Board's approval of Project No. 2025-1903 (**Attachment A**).

City's Strategic Goals:

- Invest in infrastructure to serve the needs of the community.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact on the General Fund related to this project. The City's policy is to recover 100% of the cost of staff time through project application fees.

Environmental Review:

This project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15301, "Existing facilities" which allows for exterior alterations. The project meets all the conditions necessary to qualify for the exemption and none of the exceptions listed in Section 15300.2 apply.

BACKGROUND:

The project is located at 8740-8747 La Mesa Boulevard, east of Glen Street and west of Jackson Drive as seen on the vicinity map. The applicant, Warm Hearth Inc., is requesting to remodel the front façade of the existing commercial building containing multiple retail businesses. The existing building is currently served by one curb driveway opening on La Mesa Boulevard. The existing site is landscaped with one street tree, located on the frontage of the property on La Mesa Boulevard. No other streetscape or improvements to the side façade are proposed as part of the project.

DISCUSSION:

The Urban Design Overlay requires Design Review for major renovations to ensure projects are consistent with the City's Urban Design Program and the Mixed-Use Overlay Design Guidelines. On March 9, 2026, the Design Review Board considered the proposed project and determined that it meets the intent of the Urban Design Program and Mixed-Use Overlay Design Guidelines. The DRB Certification of Action approving the project is provided as **Attachment B**.

A summary of the Board's determination is provided below.

MAJOR CIRCULATION CORRIDORS

Although the project site is located within a Major Circulation Corridor as designated by the Urban Design Program, the scope of work is limited to an exterior renovation to the existing building with no expansion proposed. The proposed project will enhance street character and retain existing street trees. The Urban Design Program recommends additional street improvements however the project scope does not include intensifying the use or increasing the building footprint. Additional street improvements recommended by the Urban Design Program such as: building setbacks, scale transition, intersection definition, street furniture, pedestrian crossings, and utility lines are not required.

Street Character

La Mesa Boulevard is characterized by low-rise commercial development. The new façade will enhance the existing street character by providing additional architectural features to the existing building and create additional interest along La Mesa Boulevard. The proposed façade enhancements will modernize and elevate the appearance of the existing structure, contributing visual interest and character. Additionally, the proposed wooden trellises will provide additional detail that is compatible with the character of the area as well as partial shading which will enhance the pedestrian experience.

Street Trees

Landscaped Medians are placed near intersections along La Mesa Boulevard between Grossmont Boulevard and Memorial Drive and Street trees are planted along the portion of La Mesa Boulevard outside of the project. The existing building has one street tree located along the existing frontage, which will remain as part of the project. No street trees or landscaping will be added as part of the project.

SITE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Building Location and Orientation

The existing site's topography is flat with a driveway located along the eastern property line. The existing building is located along the street frontage oriented to the south and parking is located north of the site, at the rear of the building. The site sits at a same elevation to the street frontage with level entry to the building from the sidewalk.

Lighting

To create a cohesive design the project's exterior lighting has been designed as part of the updated façade. New lighting is proposed to be located on the front wall elevation and will replace the existing lighting design. There are three new proposed gooseneck lights to be placed on the front façade and will be aimed and down directed towards the new centrally painted signage for Warm Hearth to minimize spillover onto adjacent buildings. The painted signage for Warm Hearth will be located above the business entrance and center of the existing building. Signage for the other tenant "The Reserve" will remain as channel lettering. The existing parking lot lighting is down directed and will not be modified as part of the project.

Landscaping

The façade update will not include any landscaping as part of the project. The building has one street tree located along the frontage. The existing street tree is proposed to remain.

Energy Conservation

Energy conservation design features were considered as part of project design, such as accounting for the natural climate of La Mesa, site orientation, landscaping elements, spacing between buildings, passive and active solar architectural elements. The project meets the Energy Conservation Guidelines through use of trellises to reduce the amount of direct sunlight on the entrance and windows. The existing white color of the building

will be maintained to minimize the amount of solar absorption by the building. Solar absorption refers to the process by which buildings absorb solar radiation, which can lead to increased interior temperatures and higher energy consumption. White paint reflects a significant percentage of incoming solar radiation, which helps to minimize solar heat absorption and reduce the need for air conditioning. The new trellises covering the windows and entrances along with color selection will help minimize the need for air conditioning.

Safety

Safety through design is a key component of the Urban Design program, including the creation of physical spaces that are clearly defined as public, semi-public, semi-private, and private. To maintain safe, accessible, and minimally disrupted pedestrian walkways and traffic flow, all existing curb openings the driveways and parking areas will remain unchanged. As part of the project, additional lighting will be installed to enhance visibility and provide improved lighting coverage for the existing businesses.

Roofs

Existing roof mounted equipment is not visible from the public right of way, with the existing parapet walls providing screening of the equipment.

ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

The Urban Design Program recommends incorporating various elements into project design including: orientation, design theme with nearby buildings, fit, consistency, form and texture, human scale, neighborhood character, pedestrian interest, variety of buildings, exposed rooftops, entries, and more.

Architectural Design

The use of consistent building materials including stucco, revised window placement, and installing new wooden trellises along the front façade to create a defined entry point and cover new windows will create a new contemporary design.

The windows at 8748 La Mesa Boulevard will be removed and replaced to maintain the current 5 window opening layout, with new windows designed to match those at 8744 La Mesa Boulevard. The variety in surface planes including varied colors, forms, and textures like stucco and wood create variety and interest across the front elevation.

Architectural Finish and Details

The Urban Design Program states that the colors for a building should reflect the application techniques that relate to the material's architectural heritage. As mentioned, the project utilizes stucco, wooden trellises, and neutral color palette. Stucco is a natural material which is prevalent in La Mesa and keeps with the tradition of the community. Colors used in the design include Extra White and Rustic Red, with the wood trellis constructed of Douglas fir and stained in a golden oak finish. The combination of neutral tones with a red accent adds visual interest to the building. The new entrance will create a clearly defined entry point for the business, and the use of trellises will introduce additional architectural detail to the site. The neutral color schemes for the building and associated structures, comprised of white and tan backgrounds accented by a brown trellis are consistent with the Urban Design Program Guidelines by providing visual interest and contrast, while not detracting from the surrounding neighborhood **(Attachment C)**.

CONCLUSION:

The Design Review Board determined that the proposed project complies with the site and architectural design guidelines of the Urban Design Program and approved the Certificate of Action for the proposed project, subject to City Council ratification.

Reviewed by:



Greg Humora
City Manager

Respectfully submitted by:



Lynnette Santos
Director of Community Development

Attachments:

- A. Draft Resolution
- B. Design Review Board Certificate of Action
- C. Color Elevations and Materials Board