



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

333 W. Ocean Boulevard Long Beach, CA 90802 (562) 570-6194 FAX (562) 570-6088

March 11, 2013

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations to the Immanuel Community Church with conversion of the church edifice into a 25-unit senior housing development, including the removal of a single family home and garage at 304 Obispo Avenue, to accommodate a new parking lot to serve the project located at 3215 East 3rd Street in the Bluff Heights Historic District. (District 2)

APPLICANT: Thomas Safran & Associates
C/o Will Cipes of Thomas Safran & Associates
11812 San Vicente Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90049
(Application No. HP 12-0303)

DISCUSSION

The subject site is located at 3215 East 3rd Street and 304 Obispo Avenue at the northeast corner of 3rd Street and Obispo Avenue (Exhibit A – Location Map). The project site is in General Plan Land Use District #2 – Mixed Style Homes and the R-2-A zoning district (Two-family Residential District). The corner site is currently developed with a two-story church above a full basement at 3215 East 3rd Street and a one story bungalow residence with a detached garage at 304 Obispo Avenue. Both properties are in the Bluff Heights Historic District (C-7937).

The proposed project involves conversion of the building that formerly housed the Immanuel Community Church, constructed between 1922 and 1923, into a senior housing project consisting of 24 independent-living, low and/or very low income seniors (62 years of age or older) dwelling units, one manager's unit and associated amenities/common areas in 31,006 square feet (Exhibit B – Plans and Photos). The church is a blend of Spanish Colonial Revival and Neoclassical architectural styles. The major alterations to the exterior of the church would include new light wells, door and window alterations, installation of rooftop equipment and removal of the colored opaque window glass for replacement with clear dual pane glass.

The project also includes the removal (through either demolition or relocation) of the existing single family home and detached garage located at 304 Obispo Avenue for the development of a 12-space parking lot to serve this project. This one story home, constructed in the early 1920's, is classified as an altered Craftsman. Although the home retains its original footprint and massing, many of the original exterior materials have been replaced. New materials added to the home include textured stucco on the porch piers and sides of the home, replacement of wood windows with vinyl and aluminum windows, and replacement of all original exterior doors. The applicant has submitted a due diligence report prepared by a historic consultant for the home (Exhibit C – Due Diligence Report, 304 Obispo Avenue).

The church was designed by prominent Long Beach architect W. Horace Austin. The building was damaged by the 1933 Long Beach earthquake, but subsequently reconstructed in 1934. The exterior walls were originally tapestry brick and marble, but were covered with textured stucco in the early 1950's. Other alterations that have occurred to the church over the years include replacement of entry steps, railings and exterior doors, the addition of a second story exit stair on the north elevation, and significant interior building alterations. The building's overall condition is good; however, the windows are generally in poor condition, especially those on the south elevation.

The most significant exterior alteration proposed for the church building is the removal of the colored opaque window glass for replacement with clear dual pane glass. This change will allow light into the residential units and visibility to the exterior. The decorative stained glass windows in the sanctuary on the north elevation of the church will remain. Other exterior changes to the church include installation of light wells, door and window alterations, new wrought iron railings and new rooftop equipment.

Interior alterations to the church space call for conversion of the basement into ten residential units, seven residential units on the first floor along with the reuse of the sanctuary area as common space, and eight residential units on the second floor along with a small fitness/library area. The existing organ and associated equipment will be maintained in its current location. The applicant has submitted a due diligence report prepared by a historic consultant for the church (Exhibit D – Due Diligence Report, 3215 East 3rd Street).

A number of meetings have taken place on this project to date, as follows:

- October 8, 2012 - A Study Session was held before the Cultural Heritage Commission to present the project to the commissioners and offer an opportunity for questions and comments. The Commission supported the project with minimal exterior alterations to the church. The Commission also strongly encouraged the applicant to attempt to relocate the home to another site within the Bluff Heights Historic District or, if that is not feasible, to another site within the City.
- December 6, 2012 - A Study Session was held before the Planning Commission to present the project proposal and offer the opportunity for questions and comments regarding this project by the Planning Commissioners. The Planning Commission supported the project with an improved parking lot fence design, the provision of an on

street loading and unloading area on 3rd Street and handicap parking. Public comments included concern for visitor parking locations, aesthetic issues due to the loss of a home and replacement with a parking lot, noise from an automated parking lot gate, on-site outdoor seating areas especially near the front entry, and reading/gathering areas for the residents in hallways and near the elevators.

- December 20, 2012 – A noticed public hearing was held before the Planning Commission to approve the Resolution Certifying the Final Environmental Impact Report, making findings and adoption of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (EIR 12-01, State Clearinghouse No. 2012091026). The Commission approved the request unanimously. One individual spoke in support and one was neutral. The remaining eight individuals spoke in opposition to the project and three letters were also received in opposition. The primary concerns raised at the hearing were negative impacts due to project density, parking, visitor parking, noise, light and glare, additional traffic, lower property values and the loss of a historic home. Also mentioned was the visual impact of the parking lot in an historic district.

An appeal of the Planning Commission's decision to certify the Final Environmental Impact Report and adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program was filed on December 28, 2012. The City Council was required to hear the appeal before the project could be placed on the agenda for the Cultural Heritage Commission's consideration. The appeal was heard by City Council on January 22, 2013. After extensive public testimony the council denied the appeal and upheld the decision of the Planning Commission to certify the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on a vote of 8-0.

If the Cultural Heritage Commission elects to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness, the final step in the approval process will be a public hearing before the Planning Commission for consideration of the remaining project entitlements and a Statement of Overriding Considerations, which is required under CEQA whenever an EIR identifies an unavoidable significant adverse project impact. The Statement of Overriding Considerations determines whether specific social, economic or other project benefits outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental impacts.

The remaining entitlements for the project include the following:

- A Site Plan Review to evaluate the design of 25 new dwelling units,
- An Administrative Use Permit (AUP) to convert the building from a church to a senior housing project (one legal nonconforming use to another nonconforming use), and
- A Standards Variance for a number of development standards relating to development of the parking lot. These variance items are:
 - a. Open parking instead of enclosed garage parking
 - b. Reduced parking lot setbacks
 - c. Reduced turning radius for the standard size stalls
 - d. More than 50 percent compact stalls
 - e. A one-way driveway to access the parking lot

The Planning Commission may further reduce the parking standards to 1 space for 3 bedrooms if it finds that the neighborhood in which the facility is proposed has ample, readily available on-street parking or is well served by public transportation and a concentration of senior services. The Site Plan Review Committee may waive the requirement for usable open space and the maximum height of a wrought iron fence within the required front setback area.

The removal of the home and detached garage at 304 Obispo Avenue for construction of a 12 space surface parking lot is considered a significant and unavoidable adverse impact. The Final EIR12-01 includes mitigation measures that reduce all identified potentially significant impacts to a less than significant level except for the impact to Cultural Resources involving demolition of the single family residence. Since this residence is considered a contributor to the Bluff Heights Historic District, the Final EIR determined that loss of this contributor would constitute a slight reduction to the design integrity of this historic district and would be a significant and unavoidable adverse impact. While relocation would be preferred to demolition, no relocation site has been identified at this time within this historic district or within the City. The applicant has provided documentation of their efforts to secure a suitable location for the home. Attached please find the action plan for relocation and list of property owners contacted (Exhibit E - Relocation Action Plan).

In compliance with Section 2.63.070 of the City of Long Beach Municipal Code (Cultural Heritage Commission), the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, and the Bluff Heights Historic District (Ordinance No. C-7937), staff has analyzed the proposed project and believes that the project meets these requirements and those of the City's zoning codes (Exhibit F - Findings and Conditions of Approval) with the adoption of EIR 12-01 and the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Public Hearing Notices were distributed on February 22, 2013, in accordance with the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance. A notice was also mailed to the Bluff Heights Neighborhood Association. Two letters in opposition to the project have been received (Exhibit G - Letters).

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR 12-01, State Clearinghouse No. 2012091026) was prepared for this project. The Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Initial Study were circulated for a public comment period from September 13, 2012 to October 12, 2012. Comments submitted in response to the Initial Study included letters of support from Long Beach Heritage and the Bluff Heights Neighborhood Association that also requested relocation rather than demolition of the existing single-family residence. The Draft EIR public comment period began on October 18, 2012 and closed December 3, 2012. Written comments on the Draft EIR were received from the State Office of Historic Preservation and the Bluff Heights Neighborhood Association. At its December 20, 2012 meeting the Planning

Commission approved the Resolution Certifying the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR 12-01) and adopted a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MM) (Exhibit H – Resolution and Mitigation Measures).

Respectfully submitted,



JILL GRIFFITHS, AICP
PLANNING OFFICER



ROBERT M. ZUR SCHMIEEDE, AICP
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

RMZ:JG:lf

Attachments Exhibit A - Location Map
 Exhibit B - Plans & Photographs
 Exhibit C - Due Diligence Report - 304 Obispo Avenue
 Exhibit D - Due Diligence Report - 3215 E 3rd Street
 Exhibit E - Relocation Action Plan
 Exhibit F - Findings & Conditions of Approval
 Exhibit G - Letters and comments submitted by the public
 Exhibit H - Resolutions and MM for EIR 12-01 for the Safran Senior Housing Project



Subject Property:
 3215 E 3rd St & 304 Obispo Ave
 Application No. 12-0303
 Council District 2
 Zoning Code : R-2-A

Exhibit A



