



# CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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February 11, 2019

CHAIR AND CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSIONERS  
City of Long Beach  
California

## RECOMMENDATION:

Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition and rebuild of a detached 332-square-foot single-car garage due to disrepair and structural safety issues. The rebuilt garage will have the same size and location as the original structure, and raised in height from 9-feet 4-inches to 11-feet 6-inches. The structure is located at 1634 Grand Avenue within the Wilton Street Historic District and the Two-family Residential Standard Lot (R-2-N) zoning district. (District 4)

APPLICANT: Christie Bruno / Tiffany Perez  
18201 W. McDermott Suite C  
Irvine, CA 92614  
(Application No. COAC 1901-02)

## THE REQUEST

The Applicants requests approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of a 332-square-foot single-car garage at the rear of the home in order to rebuild a new 332-square-foot single car garage, with the same location and size, and an increased roof height from 9-feet 4-inches to 11-feet 6-inches to support interior rafter storage.

## BACKGROUND

The subject property is located mid-block at 1634 Grand Avenue, south of Wilton Street and north of Ransom Street (Exhibit A – Location Map) within the Two-family Residential Standard Lot (R-2-N) zoning district. The property is developed with a 1,596-square-foot two-story, single-family residence, originally built in 1924, and expanded in 1983. In the rear yard, there is an existing detached single-car garage built in conjunction with the original home in 1924. The primary residence and garage are contributing structures within the Wilton Street Historic District.

The primary residence and garage are designed in the Spanish Revival architectural style. The structures feature flat roofs and parapets with a shallow accent pitch on the

front façade. The home's front façade also features an entrance patio with a sloped awning entryway with Spanish terra cotta shingles above. The exterior cladding of the home consists of a lace-finish stucco. The street-facing windows were previously permitted to be aluminum windows set inside the original wood window frames, casings and sills.

The subject garage measures approximately 18 feet by 18 feet (332 square-feet) and is located in the rear half of the lot. The garage supports parking for a single car with additional square footage for storage. The structure is constructed of conventional continuous footings around the structure's perimeter, and it has a height of 9-feet 4-inches to the top of a decorative parapet, and an internal vertical clearance of 7-feet 6-inches.

The exterior cladding and roofline of the existing garage was designed to match the primary residence and is finished with a lace-finish stucco painted to match the primary residence. Similar to the primary residence, the existing garage was permitted to have aluminum windows set inside the original wood frames, casings and sills. The garage door is a double-hinged wood barn door, and a wood service door is located on the south elevation of the garage (Exhibit B – Site Photos).

In August 2018, the Applicants first reached out to the Planning Bureau to discuss options for restoring or rebuilding the existing garage. The Applicants and homeowners noted that the existing garage has significant water damage, primarily due to water runoff from the adjacent property to the north being approximately 14-inches higher than the subject property. The Applicants noted the subject property and garage does not have a concrete stem wall (a vertical mono-pour wall commonly used to provide waterproofing as the base of a foundation); as a result, water has consistently flooded the garage and led to more extensive water damage over time.

Upon initial review, staff advised the Applicants that both the Wilton Street Historic District Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation (Secretary Standards), discourage the demolition of historic structures. According to the Wilton Street Historic District Guidelines:

*"Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence."*

However, staff also noted that Secretary Standard Number 6, does allow for the replacement of deteriorated historic structure, stating:

*"Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and*

*other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.”*

In consideration of the aforementioned standard, staff recommended the Applicants hire a third-party structural engineer to inspect the garage and produce a report analyzing if the garage could be rehabilitated and restored, or if a rebuild would be necessary to rectify the structural and safety concerns of the existing structure. The Applicants hired David Choi and Associates, Inc. (Structural Engineer) in October 2018, who produced the attached analysis concluding that a complete demolition and rebuild would be the preferred alternative citing structural safety concerns (Exhibit C – Existing Structural Conditions of Stand Alone Garage).

In addition to the existing water damage, the Structural Engineer identifies the existing 2x4 roof rafters are 200 percent overstressed per current building codes; an existing 2x8 beam is overstressed in bending by 500 percent and by 280 percent in shear forces; there is termite damage and dry rot through the structure’s framing; and, there are no plywood or shear walls in the structure’s interior. All of these factors contribute to the Structural Engineer’s recommendation for a full demolition and rebuild of the garage.

## **ANALYSIS**

The proposed project requires approval of the Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) because the size of the garage to be demolished and rebuilt exceeds the 250-square-foot threshold for staff-level approval. In order to be granted CHC approval, the project must comply with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation and meet the criteria for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

The proposed project consists of demolishing a 332-square-foot detached garage in the rear half of the property in order to construct a new 332-square-foot garage, in the same location. The proposed replacement garage will replicate the same size and configuration of the original garage and accommodate a single parking space and storage area. (Exhibit D – Plans).

Note, the subject property is located within the City’s Parking Impacted Overlay District. Pursuant to the City’s Zoning Code sections 21.41.213 and 21.41.216, a single-family home would typically be required to build a two-car garage upon a rebuild application. However, staff confirmed that due to limited lot size, a two-car garage would not be feasible in the rear half of the lot. Therefore, with the approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness, the structure is exempt from the non-conforming provisions. The Applicants also explored a range of alternatives including relocating a new garage on the rear property line and using a combination of one standard and one compact parking space, but none of these alternatives resulted in adequate turning radii or access required per the Zoning Code (Exhibit E – Site Plan Alternatives Feasibility Study).

In addition to rebuilding the garage, the Applicants are requesting to increase the roof height from 9-feet 4-inches to 11-feet 6-inches to support interior rafter storage. The proposed change is compliant with the Wilton Street Historic District Guidelines, which requires that accessory building not be taller than the roofline of the existing residence. The proposed change also complies with the R-2-N zoning standards, requiring a detached garage to be no more than 13 feet in height.

In order to compliment the property's Spanish Revival architectural style and the overall character of the Wilton Street Historic District, the replacement garage and storage area will maintain the configuration of the original flat roof, including the accented parapet with a shallow pitch. All structural openings and locations, including the garage door, service door, and windows will be maintained. In addition, the Applicants propose to replace all architectural elements with historically-appropriate doors and wood windows.

Upon review, the proposed replacement garage and storage area restores the original condition and intended functionality to the property. Inclusive of the increased building height, the project will maintain a reasonable scale within the context of the Wilton Street Historic District, designed in the Spanish Revival architectural style. Several properties in the District consist of single-story structures at front of the lot with second-story units and accessory structures in the rear-half of the lot.

The proposed project is compliant with the following Secretary of Interior Standards:

**Standard No. 2: "The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided."** The Applicants are proposing to rebuild and replace the existing garage, maintaining the existing structure's footprint, openings, roofline and other architectural elements that match the historic character of the property.

**Standard No. 6: "Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence."** The Applicants provided site photos of the existing structure, and the Structural Engineer documented the original internal structural elements and construction details. The proposed plans include the full replacement of historic features and elements.

**Standard No. 9: "The new addition will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property".** As proposed, the proposed replacement garage meets all applicable zoning regulations and guidelines for the Wilton Street Historic District. The replacement garage will be subordinate to the primary residence, and it will maintain a reasonable scale and massing with surrounding properties.

**Standard No. 9 also states: “It is important that the new addition be visually distinguished from the historic building. The addition should not give a false sense of the property’s historical development” and “new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features.”** While the proposed 332-square-foot garage will not be an original structure to the property, the replacement garage will incorporate consistent materials and elements compatible with the original home and the Spanish Revival architectural style. In addition, the detached garage will incorporate a smooth stucco finish and new interior cladding and structural shear walls, which will distinguish the garage as new structure built to current building code standards.

**Standard No. 10: “New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.”** The proposed replacement garage will be a detached structure; therefore, it will not impair or impact the form and integrity of the existing primary residence.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff analyzed the proposed project and determined that the proposed demolition and rebuild of the subject garage meets the requirements set forth in Title 21 of the City’s Zoning Code, Section 2.63.080 (Cultural Heritage Commission) of the Long Beach Municipal Code, the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and the Wilton Street Historic District Ordinance.

As conditioned, staff supports approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the existing garage and construction of a new 332-square-foot garage with the same size footprint and location as the original structure. All the findings can be made in the affirmative for the proposed improvements, which are compatible in overall scale, massing, proportions, materials and colors to the architectural style of the existing structure on the property and in the context of the Wilton Street Historic District. Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness subject to the conditions of approval (Exhibit F – Findings and Conditions of Approval).

### **PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

Public notices were distributed on January 28, 2019. As of the date of this report, no public comments have been filed as it relates to the project.

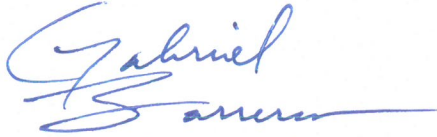
### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

In accordance with Section 15302, Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), environmental review is not required for the demolition, replacement or reconstruction of structures that will be located on the same



site as the structure replaced, and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the original structure.

Respectfully submitted,



GABRIEL BARREARS, AICP  
PROJECT PLANNER



ALEJANDRO PLASCENCIA  
PRESERVATION PLANNER

AP:gb

Attachments:   Exhibit A – Location Map  
                      Exhibit B – Site Photos  
                      Exhibit C – Existing Structural Conditions of Stand Alone Garage  
                      Exhibit D – Plans  
                      Exhibit E – Site Plan Alternatives Feasibility Study  
                      Exhibit F – Findings & Conditions of Approval