

June 30, 2020

CHAIR AND CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach

California

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a new one-story, 576-square-foot Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) at a property located at 3541 Rose Avenue, a contributing lot within the California Heights Historic District. (District 7)

APPLICANT: Paars Design – Jason Robinson
P.O. Box 881504
Los Angeles, CA 90009
(Application No. COAC2003-01)

THE REQUEST

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a new one-story, 576-square-foot Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). No new square-footage or improvements are proposed to the existing single-family house.

BACKGROUND

This application was originally placed on the May 26, 2020 Cultural Heritage Commission agenda. Mailed notices were sent out as required by the Zoning Code. In addition to mailed notices, the City's noticing requirements also require that a public hearing poster be posted on the site fourteen days prior to the public hearing. This site posting requirement was not met, and the Commission was advised of the noticing error at the May 26, 2020 meeting. As a result, the Commission continued the case to its next regularly scheduled meeting in June, and the hearing notice was subsequently posted on the subject site, in accordance with applicable noticing requirements.

The subject property is located on the west side of Rose Avenue, between 35th and 36th Streets (Exhibit A - Location Map), within the R-1-N zone (Single Family Residential, Standard Lots). The subject property totals 5,737 square feet in area. The subject property is developed with a 1,236-square-foot, single-story house and a detached two-car garage. The existing primary residence fronts on Rose Avenue and is set back approximately 21 feet 9 inches from the front property line and approximately 34 feet from the detached garage. The detached garage is located approximately 10-inches from the south (side) property line and is set back approximately 7 feet 5 inches from the rear (west) property line. A 15-foot-wide public alley borders the subject property to the west. Based on building permits, the house and garage were constructed in 1939.



The property is a contributing lot within the California Heights Historic District. The single-story house was designed in the Minimal Traditional architectural style. The exterior cladding of the residence and garage consists of 8-inch wide shiplap wood planks mounted horizontally. The house features a variety of window styles (including a prominent bay window on the front elevation and fixed and double hung sash windows) and a hipped roof system with a small, front-facing gable. The house is painted an off-white (cream) body color with white trim, a blue accent color and brown composite roof shingles. (Exhibit B – Photographs). No interior or exterior work is proposed to the existing contributing structure as part of this application.

ANALYSIS

The applicant is proposing to construct a new 576-square-foot ADU. The proposed project requires the approval of the CHC because the proposed ADU constitutes infill construction and exceeds 250 square feet. To be granted approval, the project must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and meet the criteria for a Certificate of Appropriateness. Under State law, an ADU is generally allowed by-right on this site, subject to compliance with unit size requirements and other ADU development standards. This application is limited to design review by the CHC, pursuant to Section 2.63.080 of the City of Long Beach Municipal Code (CHC), for consistency with historic district standards.

The proposed ADU is square in shape, measuring 24'-0" by 24'-0". The ADU would be located between the primary residence and garage. The ADU will be attached to the garage, and, as proposed, is set back approximately 10-feet from the primary residence and five-feet from the south (side) property line. The ADU will feature a living room, a kitchen, a bedroom and a bathroom. (Exhibit C - Plans).

Several architectural features are incorporated into the ADU design to integrate the proposed structure with the existing residence, including a pyramid roof system with composite shingles, matching 8-inch-wide, shiplap wood siding and double hung wood sash windows. The proposed ADU will feature an off-white body color (DE White Picket Fence), a white trim color (DE White), brown roof vents (DE Tavern Creek) and brown (Owens Corning Brownwood) composite roof shingles.

The existing home is set back 5 feet-6 inches from the south (side) property line and the garage is set back approximately 10-inches from the south (side) property line. Tucked between the two structures, the proposed ADU is proposed 5 feet from the south (side) property line and will be fully screened from view from Rose Avenue and from the public alley at the rear of the lot. The existing garage features a 3:12 roof pitch. Attached to the garage, the new ADU roof would comprise a similar 3:12 roof pitch and will feature matching composite roof shingles. The height of the existing garage is 12 feet 4 inches as measured to the peak of the roof and the height of the proposed ADU is 13 feet to the peak of the roof. The proposed ADU is designed to be compatible with the primary house and garage and will not be visible from the front of the property.

The Design Guidelines for the California Heights Historic District provide guidance for infill construction. The guidelines state that new construction should be generally compatible with the existing contributing buildings in the District and reasonably “blend in” with its surroundings. The proposed ADU is located in the rear half of the property and will not be visible from the public right-of-way. The structure has been designed with Minimal Traditional architectural features and materials, which is the style of the contributing structure on the site and is present throughout the District. The proposed property would not change the use of the site or disrupt the visual character of the District. The structure is consistent with the development standards of the Long Beach Municipal Code and California Heights Historic District Ordinance.

The Design Guidelines for the California Heights Historic District provide guidance for ADUs. The ordinance states that an ADU addition to the rear of the residence is acceptable provided the addition is not highly visible from the public right-of-way. The ordinance further states that ADUs, should not be taller than the existing structure, and should be architecturally compatible with the historic building design. The project will maintain an appropriate scale with the context of the California Heights Historic District and context of the block, which consists of a mix of one-story and two-story structures and a variety of architectural styles on Rose Avenue, ranging from Minimal Traditional, Craftsman and Spanish Colonial Revival. As proposed, the scale and size of the ADU do not detract from the existing residence as either a contributing structure or as a primary structure. The overall height of the existing primary residence is 16 feet 1 inch measured to the top of the existing roof. The highest point of the proposed ADU is 13 feet in height. The primary house will properly screen the ADU from view in compliance with Standard No. 9. Similarly, the width of the proposed ADU is smaller than the original primary residence. This design results in an addition that is completely tucked behind the front residence and will not therefore be visible when viewed from Rose Avenue.

The proposed structure is compatible with the existing residence’s architectural style. The improvements should not give a false sense of the property’s historical development. The Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, Standard No. 9 states that “new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features...” The new ADU has been designed to complement the design of the existing structure but has also been designed with a lower building height to differentiate the project from the original primary residence. The proposed project will provide a cohesive design between the new ADU and the existing structure.

As designed, the proposed one-story ADU will not have visual impacts when viewed from the front of the lot along Rose Avenue. The proposed ADU will be consistent and in full compliance with the City’s residential development standards for the R-1-N (Single-Family Residential, Standard Lot) zoning district, the California Heights Historic District Ordinance (C-7702) and the California Heights Historic District Design Guidelines. The proposed ADU is located in the rear half of the property and will be compatible in massing and size, yet distinguishable from, the original building.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff has analyzed the proposed project and has determined that the project 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 Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings and the California Heights Historic District Ordinance. With conditions, Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of a one-story, 576 square-foot accessory dwelling unit at the rear of the single-family lot. All the findings can be made in the affirmative for the proposed improvements, as these improvements are compatible in overall scale, massing, proportions and materials to the architectural style of the existing structure on the property and with the context of the District. Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness, subject to the conditions of approval (Exhibit D – Findings and Conditions of Approval).

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This project has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Based on that assessment, the City has determined the project to be Categorically Exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to the provisions of Article 19 Section 15303 (a) (new construction or conversion of small structures) of the CEQA Guidelines. No further environmental review is required.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Public notices were distributed on April 12, 2020. This case was continued to a date certain at the May 26, 2020 CHC meeting and, therefore, no additional noticing, beyond the on-site posting of the public hearing notice noted above, is required. As of this date, no letters were received in response to this project.

Respectfully submitted,



GINA CASILLAS
PROJECT PLANNER



ALEJANDRO PLASCENCIA
PRESERVATION PLANNER



CHRISTOPHER KOONTZ, AICP



PATRICIA A. DIEFENDERFER, AICP

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PLANNING BUREAU MANAGER

ADVANCE PLANNING OFFICER

CK:PD:AP:gc

Attachments: Exhibit A – Location Map
 Exhibit B – Photographs
 Exhibit C – Plans
 Exhibit D – Findings and Conditions of Approval