

January 7, 2021

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach

California

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept Categorical Exemption CE-20-131 and approve Conditional Use Permit CUP20-013, to allow an existing senior housing community to expand onsite services to include a 1,100-square-foot medical clinic/office use located at 3021 N. Gold Star Drive in the Moderate-Density Multiple Residential (R-4-R) Zoning District. (District 7)

APPLICANT: Fady Tawadrous
2944 East Blueridge Avenue
Orange, CA 92867
(Application No. 2007-21)

DISCUSSION

The site is located on the west side of Santa Fe Avenue between West 32nd Street and West Spring Street (Exhibit A - Vicinity Map). The site is the location of The American Gold Star Manor, a 25-acre, 348-unit, affordable, senior housing facility that provides permanent housing for 440 parents of U.S. veterans, U.S. veterans and other eligible seniors. The current use of the site for senior housing use is a legal non-conforming use because Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is required to establish the use under the current zoning requirements. The site maintains fourteen buildings in a campus setting. The site immediately abuts residential uses to the west, north, and to the south. The site also abuts commercial and park uses to the east.

The site is within the Moderate-Density Multiple Residential (R-4-R) zoning district and has a General Plan Land Use PlaceType designation of Multiple Family Residential Moderate Density (MFR-M). The R-4-R zoning district intends to provide moderate density residential uses consistent in scale with existing older and lower density developments. The MFR-M PlaceType encourages well-designed infill housing where multi-family residential already exists or where project residents would be well-served by proximity to commercial uses and transit services.



Figure 1. Aerial



The building is located in the northern portion of the 25-acre site, as shown in blue in Figure 1. The applicant is requesting approval for a medical office/clinic use as a part of a senior housing facility in a multi-family residential zone. The project includes interior remodel of the first floor of an existing structure to create a 1,100-square-foot medical clinic, which includes patient intake area, a waiting room, private examining rooms, and a small lab facility for use largely by the senior residents on the campus of the Manor (Exhibit B - Plans and Photographs). The interior improvements will require building permits for the change of occupancy. The proposed exterior changes to the existing building would include installation of an awning over the entry and construction of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant ramp.

A medical clinic/office may only be permitted as a supportive service (accessory use) to senior housing in the R-4-R zoning Districts. The addition of the medical/clinic is an expansion or intensification of the senior housing use and therefore requires a conditional use permit (Long Beach Municipal Code 21.27.060). The primary use on site is the senior housing residential community. The site maintains indoor and outdoor accessory recreation areas, such as the Recreation Hall. The proposed medical clinic is intended to function as an accessory use to the primary existing senior housing use on the. The provision of on-site medical clinic/office in combination with a senior housing development is a common best practice in affordable housing. The medical clinic/office use is intended for existing residents and special groups by appointment. The subject building was once a WWII barracks built in the 1940s and has been vacant for over 45 years. It is currently used for storage.

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The purpose of a CUP is to allow the individual review of certain land uses to ensure they are compatible with surrounding uses, or, through the imposition of conditions, can be made compatible with surrounding uses. The approval of this accessory medical use will provide a more convenient way for the senior residents to receive medical attention on-site as needed. The medical use proposed would not increase the parking demand as the clinic will only serve the residents of the site and selective contracted groups with appointments, urgent care and house call services. The existing site has available surface parking to comply with the required parking for a medical use, both in the parking found throughout the larger campus and in parking spaces located adjacent to the building where the medical clinic is proposed. The conditional use permit process additionally allows for the regulation of the use to ensure compatibility with surrounding uses, including hours of operation.

The proposed hours of operation are proposed as Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. As proposed, the hours of operation are not anticipated to have any impacts on the surrounding uses. The required CUP findings, Section 21.52.233 of the Long Beach Municipal Code, additionally establish special conditions that must be met for senior housing developments. The special findings may be found inapplicable due to unique circumstances of the proposed project. In this case, the proposed medical clinic/office use would be accessory to the already established senior housing development. The intent of the special conditions included in Section 21.52.233 of the Municipal Code is for the establishment of new facilities to ensure that senior and special needs housing is located, developed, and maintained in a uniform manner. Included in these special conditions are site location criteria (crime rates, adjacency to transit), density, appropriate parking, deed restriction, appropriate ADA-accessible design features, and open space. As an existing development, many of these conditions do not apply. The project design does however propose a ramp to ensure the use is ADA accessible (Exhibit C - Findings).

The medical clinic/office would be an accessory use to the senior housing development and permitted in the R-4-R zone with a Conditional Use Permit per LMBC Table 31-1. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission accept Categorical Exemption CE-20-131 and approve Conditional Use Permit CUP20-013, to allow the conversion of an existing vacant residential building into a 1,100-square-foot medical clinic to serve the American Gold Star Manor senior housing community and special groups with appointments, subject to Conditions of Approval. (Exhibit D - Conditions of Approval).

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

In accordance with provisions of the Long Beach Municipal Code, 805 public hearing notices were distributed on December 15, 2020. As of the time of writing this report, staff has received no comments on the proposed project.

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ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with the Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, the project is exempt per Section 15303 Class 3 (b) (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines. (CE20-131)

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments: Exhibit A - Vicinity Map
 Exhibit B - Plans and Photographs
 Exhibit C - Findings
 Exhibit D - Conditions of Approval