

August 5, 2021

**CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS**

City of Long Beach  
California

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Accept Categorical Exemption CE19-270 and approve Conditional Use Permit CUP19-044 to operate a community assembly use within a new, one-story 26'-3" high chapel, located at 245 W. Wardlow Road within the Moderate-Density Multiple Residential (R-4-R) Zoning District. (District 7).

**APPLICANT:** Alex Kang  
c/o Satoh Brothers International Inc.  
19750 S. Vermont Avenue, Suite 100  
Torrance, CA 90502  
(Application No. 1912-09)

**DISCUSSION**

The site is located on the north east corner of West Wardlow Road and Cedar Avenue, between Pacific Avenue to the east and Cedar Avenue to the west, south of the I-405 Freeway (Attachment A - Vicinity Map). The site is within the Moderate-Density Multiple Residential (R-4-R) Zoning District and has a General Plan PlaceType of Transit-Oriented Development - Low (TOD-L). The surrounding land uses include multi-family residential uses which abut directly to the north and across the alley to the north-east; senior housing across the alley to the east; a nursing facility to the west; and a business office to the south, across West Wardlow Road.

The overall site is 47,870 square feet in area and developed with three structures and an accessory structure; a church/Sunday school, a daycare building, and a detached garage. The existing 'L-Shaped' church was completed in 1964, as two buildings, connected by a breezeway. The church/Sunday school and daycare buildings are arranged around a central courtyard with artificial turf, rubberized paving, planters, concrete paths, a wood shade structure, and mature trees. A Special Use Permit was approved for the use of the existing building for a religious assembly use on June 6, 1963 (Special Use Permit S-117-63). On July 27, 1989 the Planning Commission approved a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the use of a day-care service (Application No. 8906-



## CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

August 5, 2021

Page 2 of 4

23). On May 22, 1992, an Administrative Use Permit for a 754-square-foot addition to the existing sanctuary, was conditionally approved (Application No. 9204-23). On February 12, 2007, a modification to an existing CUP to allow for the construction of a 1,140-square foot addition to the existing child care center and associated playground was conditionally approved. (Application No. 0607-11). The church and daycare building occupy the central portion of the parcel and are bounded to the north and south by surface parking areas and surrounded by low brick walls with built-in planters.

The applicant is requesting a CUP to operate a community assembly use for religious worship because of the main assembly area will be demolished and replaced with a new structure. Within the R-4-R Zoning District, the operation of a community assembly use for religious worship requires approval of a CUP. The applicant is demolishing approximately 4,800 square feet of the existing assembly area and rebuilding a new detached building approximately 3,000 square feet in area (Attachment B – Plans and Photographs). Additionally, a meditation garden would be located on the east side of the property. As proposed, the height of the building will be 26'-3" where a maximum of 28' is permitted. The building would be setback 15' from Cedar Avenue and 130' from Wardlow Road. The required parking for the overall site is 56 spaces and the applicant proposes to provide 72 spaces. The building complies with the development standards of the R4-R- Zoning District.

A historic assessment was conducted as part of this review because the existing building which is over 40 years old will be demolished as part of the project. The Historic Resources Group prepared a historic resource assessment for the property, which dated March 10, 2021. The building was documented to have a Mid-century Modern style but lacks the quality of architectural details to merit being listed. Furthermore, the building was not found to be affiliated with a specific person or group of significance that would make it historically noteworthy. Based on observations of existing conditions, research related to the history of the property, review of the relevant historic contexts, and an analysis under the eligibility criteria and integrity thresholds for historic designation at the federal, state, or local levels, it was found that the property does not meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, or as a City of Long Beach Landmark (Attachment C - Historic Assessment).

The purpose of the CUP is to allow for the individual review of uses so that the Planning Commission may determine whether the type of use proposed, or the location of the use is compatible with surrounding uses, or with the imposition of the conditions can be made compatible. Even though the use is an existing use, the demolition of the existing assembly area and construction of a 3,000 square foot detached building to be used for and operated as a community assembly area for religious use in the R-4-R zoning district triggers the requirement for a CUP. Staff finds that positive findings can be made regarding compliance with the General Plan and Specific Plan, and findings (Attachment D - Findings). To ensure compatibility, conditions restricting the use of amplified sound outdoor is recommended. (Attachment E - Conditions of Approval). The existing building to the north, will temporarily be used to hold service until construction is complete. After the new church building is completed, the two existing buildings will be accessory to the main chapel. The two accessory buildings will hold the administrative offices, meeting space and areas devoted to spiritual energy healing and holistic wellness practices. Once construction is complete, the new 3,000-square-foot chapel will be used for religious worship, special presentations to the public and overall will serve as the main gathering place (Attachment F - Project Description).

Overall, the project will be developed in a manner consistent with the standards for the R-4-R Zoning District. Approval of a CUP is consistent when it carries out the intent of the General Plan, and otherwise complies with the required findings for the Zoning Regulations. The TOD-L PlaceType encourages a range of uses that includes higher density multifamily housing and a variety of community-serving uses. The proposed construction of a church and religious assembly use is consistent with the General Plan TOD-L PlaceType goal to encourage a mix of uses that provide services and amenities to area residents. Therefore, the use is consistent with Land Use Policy 10-1, which “ensure(s) neighborhood contain a variety of functional attributes that contribute to residents’ day-to-day living...” The overall project is consistent with and carries out the goals and policies of the General Plan.

### **PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

A total of 605 public hearing notices were distributed on July 19, 2021 in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 21.21 of the Long Beach Municipal Code. At the time of writing this report, staff has received no comments in response to the hearing notice.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

In accordance with the Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, the project is exempt per Section 15302 Class 2 (b) - (Replacement or Reconstruction) of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (CEQA). For the purposes of CEQA the project includes the demolition of an existing 4,800 square-foot building and construction of a new 3,000-square-foot, one-story, building in conjunction with new parking and landscaping improvements. (CE19-270)

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

August 5, 2021

Page 4 of 4

Respectfully submitted,



MARCOS LOPEZ, JR.  
PROJECT PLANNER



ALEXIS OROPEZA  
CURRENT PLANNING OFFICER



PATRICIA DIEFENDERFER, AICP  
PLANNING BUREAU MANAGER



CHRISTOPHER KOONTZ  
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR



OSCAR W. ORCI  
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

OO:PD:CK:AO:ml

Attachments:

- Attachment A - Vicinity Map
- Attachment B - Plans and Photographs
- Attachment C - Historic Assessment
- Attachment D - Findings
- Attachment E - Conditions of Approval
- Attachment F - Project Description