

May 31, 2022

**CHAIR AND CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSIONERS**

City of Long Beach  
California

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness to adaptively reuse an existing locally designated historic landmark building (Bank of Belmont Shore) from commercial mercantile and office space into a restaurant and office space with minor site improvements at 5354 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in the Neighborhood Pedestrian (CNP) Zoning District. Improvements to the building include the removal of non-original storefronts, restoration of iron grilles and openings at the corner tower element, addition of fabric awnings, construction of a detached patio structure, installation of new mechanical equipment, and completion of associated Title 24 and life and safety upgrades to support the change of use. (District 3)

**APPLICANT:** Itzel Meynard  
245 E. 3rd St  
Long Beach, CA 90802  
(Application No. COAC2201-05)

**THE REQUEST**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness to modify the exterior of the Bank of Belmont Shore landmark building and make minor improvements to support the adaptive reuse of the building for a restaurant and office space.

**BACKGROUND**

The subject site is located at 5354 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, on the southeast corner of East 2nd Street and Santa Ana Avenue, within the Neighborhood Pedestrian (CNP) Zoning District (Attachment A - Vicinity Map). The site has a 1989 General Plan Land Use designation of Land Use District (LUD) No. 8P, Pedestrian-Oriented Retail Strip, which entails strip retail uses catering primarily to pedestrian trade.<sup>1</sup> The site is surrounded by commercial uses to the east and west and to the north, across East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. An existing public surface parking lot is located south of the subject site, across the existing 15-foot-wide public alley. The nearest residential uses are located southeast of the subject site across the existing 15-foot-wide public alley.

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<sup>1</sup> The General Plan Land Use Element was updated in 2019 and has not yet been certified as part of the City's Local Coastal Program. Therefore, the 1989 General Plan Land Use Element (1989) designation of Land Use District (LUD) No. 8P remains applicable to the project site.



The subject property is a rectangular lot (12,900 square feet) and maintains 129 feet of frontage along East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and 100 feet of frontage along Santa Ana Avenue. The site is currently developed with a 10,013-square-foot two-story commercial building, known as the Bank of Belmont Shore, and a surface parking lot with 20 off-street parking spaces (14 spaces and 6 tandem spaces). The eastern portion of the site features a surface parking lot with ornamental landscaping. A portion of the existing building cantilevers over existing parking spaces, functioning similar to a carport structure.

### Historical Background

The one-story building was originally constructed in 1929 in the Spanish Colonial Revival style designed by Long Beach architect/engineer Ray A. Sites. (Attachment B – Department of Parks and Recreation Form 523). The building featured stucco walls, red tile roof, arched windows and a corner tower element. Patty's Restaurant was the first business to occupy the commercial building. The building continued to be used as a restaurant under several different owners until 1950. The building has had a fascinating succession of uses, with construction drawings dated 1929 for Mr. C. E. Patty's Restaurant prepared by Ray A. Sites of Long Beach. City Directories, however, first list this restaurant in 1933, but by 1935, the building was vacant. The next restaurant to occupy this space belonged to Louis Gersten, who lived with his wife Anna at 40 La Verne Ave, a few blocks away. This business survived until 1945, when it became Irwin Schuman's restaurant; construction drawings show that an addition and alterations were done at this time. The 1948 Directory lists Jack Laskey's restaurant.

The building was significantly remodeled in 1950 by Long Beach architect Francis H. Gentry at which time the building was changed from a restaurant to a bank use and was occupied by the Bank of Belmont Shore. The main improvement to the building included the addition of a new second floor. The two-story building was designed as a single large rectangular hall which featured a corner tower, a covered porte cochere on the east side, large arched windows with subdivided and radiating muntins facing Second Street, smaller square window openings located on the side façade, a small balconet with wrought iron railing located on the second story on the side façade, red terra cotta roof tiles and stucco exterior walls.

Several modifications were approved in the subsequent years. In 1983, the building was remodeled for Coast Bank, which included constructing a new carport, removing the windows and grill on the tower, installing new awnings, installing automated teller machines (ATMs) on the tower elevation (Santa Ana Ave), and installing new floor tiles on the recessed entry along the Santa Ana Ave elevation. In 1986, an addition to the second floor was approved which resulted in the cantilevered building portion visible from Second Street. In 1994, a tenant improvement was completed to convert the first floor of the building to a video rental store. In 2011, interior modifications changed the video rental use back to a bank use. (Attachment C – Historic Plans) and (Attachment D - Site Photographs).

### Landmark Status

In 1994, the building was formally designated as a local landmark, named the Bank of Belmont Shore. The ordinance states “this building is one of the few early commercial structures on Second Street which has retained its original architectural character, and for which the succession of uses reflects a dynamic economic environment. The building’s Spanish Colonial Revival style is in harmony with the predominant architectural style of the surrounding residential neighborhood...Its design relates to the predominant architectural character of the residential neighborhood of Belmont Shore, Spanish Colonial Revival. It is one of the few commercial buildings on Second Street to retain its original architectural style.” The ordinance describes the building as “a single large rectangular hall with a corner tower and a covered porte-cochere on the east side. Large arched windows face Second Street, with subdivided and radiating muntins. There are smaller square window openings on the side façade; a small balconet with wrought iron railing is on the second story on the side facade. The roof is clad in red terracotta tile; the walls are stucco. The side facade has been altered with rectangular relief strips framing the windows. The tower has a hipped roof and small arched windows with curved brackets, supporting a boxed cornice. The interior has been totally modernized; no historic fabric remains”. The ordinance identifies the importance of the history of the building as “one of the few remaining structures on a busy commercial street to retain its original architectural character. Its style, Spanish Colonial Revival, references the adjacent residential neighborhood of Belmont Shore, developed primarily in the Twenties. The building has had a succession of uses, and remodeling, reflecting the dynamic commercial environment of Second Street.” (1986 alteration) (Attachment E – Landmark Ordinance [Ord. C-7272]).

Today, the building still retains the shape and form as constructed in 1950. The building’s tower element is clearly visible. Based on historic building plans (1929), the tower element at the corner of East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Santa Ana Avenue featured rectangular openings with ornate grilles. The subsequent remodeling of the commercial building included removal of these documented features as well as the conversion of arched windows to square windows on the elevation along Santa Ana Avenue. The existing site conditions maintain an intact solid tower feature and the square windows along Santa Ana Avenue, which represent modifications from the documented 1929 building features.

### ANALYSIS

The application and plans propose several modifications to the building exterior. The exterior modifications include the removal of existing storefront windows, installing new wall tiles along the perimeter of the archways, and the construction of a new outdoor patio. The Cultural Heritage Commission shall be responsible for considering and issuing certificates of appropriateness for substantial alterations made to City designated Landmarks. To be granted approval, the project must comply with the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards* and meet the criteria for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness.

The code requires all exterior modifications to obtain a Site Plan Review (design review) approval granted by the SPR Committee because the property is located in the CNP Zoning

District. Upon approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness, this project will complete design review with the SPR Committee for the proposed exterior changes.

### The Project

The exterior modifications include the removal of existing storefront windows, restoring the iron grilles at the corner tower element, installing new fabric awnings along the 2nd Street elevation, constructing a detached patio structure, installing new mechanical equipment behind existing screening on the roof. (Attachment F – Project Plans).

As part of the project, the entire 6,156 square feet of conditioned ground floor area (previous bank use) would be converted to a restaurant. The floor plan illustrates new dining area, a new kitchen, back of house (storage) areas, a new arcade (patio dining), and a new outdoor patio dining area (non-conditioned space). No changes are proposed to the second floor of the building which will remain as office use.

### Windows and New Openings

As stated above, building has been modified several times. The windows and entry doors currently on the building today are non-original to the 1950 remodel, as they been previously modified and replaced from the original condition during the building modifications in 1986. The applicant proposes to create an arcade by removing the storefront windows along the north elevation (Second Street) and on the east (interior) elevation and constructing a new exterior wall which will be set back approximately 14-feet from the front wall. The arched window openings would be retained unchanged.

The new wall as proposed will feature similar arched windows and a new storefront entry to simulate the removed windows and door. New decorative wall tile would be installed at the interior of the archways along 2nd Street. The removal of the existing windows and entry door will not diminish the historic significance of the building, as the existing arched window openings will be retained, and the front elevation of building could be returned to original (1950).

### Tower

The tower has been modified several times over the years. Based on photographic records, past modifications to the tower element included the removal of the windows and decorative metal grills, and the installation of an ATM at the ground level. Under this application, the tower element would be restored to the original 1950 design. The two window openings that were previously sealed would be restored along the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street frontage and a new decorative metal wrought iron grill will be installed to match metal grill detail found on the historic building plans on file. Furthermore, consistent with the historic plans, a new wrought iron grille (with no additional window openings) would be installed on the Santa Ana elevation of the tower.

### Awnings

Three new fabric awnings would be installed over the modified window arches along the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street frontage are proposed. The renderings illustrate that the new fabric awnings will be brown in color and will consist of a flat panel design. The final design of the awnings has been conditioned to be consistent with the design of awnings in the Spanish Colonial Revival Architectural Style Guide. In addition, the plans include the removal of a non-historic fabric awning over the side entry on Santa Ana Avenue.

### Patio

The project includes the addition of a 299-square foot detached covered patio and sidewalk dining areas. The new 18-foot by 13-foot detached patio will be located on the west side of the building. The new covered patio will be constructed using “ipe” wood (which also known around the world as a Brazilian walnut) and it will be stained in a walnut color. The detached patio area would feature a shade structure in a design that is complementary to the Spanish Colonial Revival Architectural Style. The sidewalk dining area would be enclosed with wrought iron railing to match the restored feature on the tower element.

### Exterior Finishes and Colors

The plans illustrate that the building will be repainted to be compatible with the Spanish Colonial Revival style guide. The building will feature a white stucco color (DE Milk Glass) accented with a brown trim color (DE Bear in Mind), and will feature bronze colored anodized aluminum railings, brown fabric awnings (Sunbrella flat panel Mahogany) and decorative wall tiles.

The Landmark Ordinance acknowledges the building modifications that occurred over time with various changes of use: “Although remodeled for a succession of different businesses over the years, it has maintained a continuous presence amidst much demolition and new construction along Second Street.” (Ord. C-7272). The proposed changes would not alter the form or style of the existing building that would detract from the historic presence this structure brings to this portion of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. All proposed modifications to the landmark building would be reversible. In addition, the restoration of features at the tower element ensures that physical changes to the exterior that are invasive, including the two new window openings, are consistent with historic building plans, and do not represent an irreversible departure from historic conditions. The project also restores the building back to its original use as a restaurant.

The proposed modifications of the landmark building take inspiration from the original construction in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The Landmark Ordinance directly acknowledges the importance of the previous remodeling and building modifications as a feature that contributes to the relevance of the structure, “reflecting the dynamic commercial environment of Second Street.” Due to the relevance of past projects, the applicant has not been required to remove the remnants of the 1950s and 1980s modifications. Rather, the proposed changes are minimal, reversible, and consistent with the Spanish Colonial Revival style that defines the building. The proposed remodel would maintain the form and context of

the existing condition, while reusing the building for a pedestrian-serving use. This project would restore a restaurant use, the original use, to the landmark building.

The new mechanical equipment located on the rooftop would be required to fully screened. Any additional exterior changes required for Title 24 or life and safety requirements, that are not included in plans on file, would require additional review and a Certificate of Appropriateness. As conditioned, there would be no resizing of the existing arched openings as part of this application. (Attachment G – Conditions of Approval).

The proposed use will be consistent and in compliance with the City's zoning standards for the CNP Zoning District, the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, Bank of Belmont Shore Landmark Ordinance, and the Spanish Colonial Revival Architectural Style Guide. The proposed changes to the building will be compatible with the original structure and includes restoration of the tower element. The proposed style is also compatible neighborhood context, and the building will remain recognizable to the Belmont Shore community. Within the context of the Landmark Ordinance, staff can make positive findings for approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

### **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*, the Bank of Belmont Shore Landmark Ordinance, and the Spanish Colonial Revival Architectural Style Guide. With conditions, Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the adaptive use of the building to restaurant and office space, which includes the removal of non-original storefronts, restoration of iron grilles at the corner tower element, construction of a detached patio structure, installation of new mechanical equipment, and completion of associated Title 24 and life and safety upgrades to support the change of use. All the findings can be made in the affirmative for the proposed improvements, as these improvements are compatible with the architectural style of landmark structure on the site and within the context of documented historic plans (Attachment H – Findings). Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness, subject to the 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 (New Construction or Conversion Of Small Structures), 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land), and 15331 (Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation) of the CEQA Guidelines. No further environmental review is required.

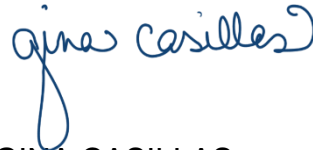
**PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

A total of 892 public notices were distributed on May 10, 2022. As of the preparation of this staff report, no public correspondence has been received in response to the noticing of this project.

Respectfully submitted,



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PROJECT PLANNER



GINA CASILLAS  
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ALEJANDRO PLASCENCIA  
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Attachments: Attachment A – Vicinity Map  
Attachment B – Department of Parks and Recreation Form 523  
Attachment C – Historic Plans  
Attachment D – Site Photographs  
Attachment E – Landmark Ordinance (Ord. C-7272)  
Attachment F – Project Plans  
Attachment G – Conditions of Approval  
Attachment H – Findings