

January 31, 2023

**CHAIR AND CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSIONERS**

City of Long Beach  
California

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness to allow a 750 square-foot, two-story addition to the rear of an existing two-story single-family home and a 56 square-foot expansion of the basement level. The scope-of-work includes a 215 square-foot single-car garage with an attached carport to the existing 2-car garage; and a 103 square-foot accessory addition. A 965 square-foot second floor Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) over the garage is also a part of this project, however due to State legislation, the ADU is deemed approved, as it has been over 61-days since application. Hence, it is not under CHC's purview for review and consideration. The property is located at 2749 E. Ocean Boulevard in the Two-Family Residential District with Large Lots (R-2-L) Zoning District. It is a Contributor to the Bluff Park Historic District. (District 2).

**APPLICANT:** Nagy Bakhoun, RA,  
Obelisk Architects  
3800 Pacific Coast Highway  
Torrance, CA 90505  
(Application No. COAC2203-01)

**THE REQUEST**

The applicant requests approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a 750 square-foot two-story addition to the rear of an existing two-story single-family home, and a 56 square-foot addition at the basement level. Additional proposed work includes the construction of a 215 square-foot single-car garage with a carport, attached to the existing two-car garage (total area of 699 square-feet), and 290 square-feet of attached accessory space.

**BACKGROUND**

On November 29, 2022, this proposed project was presented to the Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) for consideration. A version of this plan was presented that originally proposed a 732 square-foot two-story addition (prior staff report referenced 637 square-feet in which the calculations were incorrect) attached to the rear of the primary dwelling (Attachment



A – November 29, 2022 Staff Report). During the public hearing, numerous comments from members of the public expressed the following concerns:

- Significance of Irving J. Gill's work, and the need to preserve his remaining structures.
- Concerns with building an addition to the building or introducing any modifications.
- Additional time for public review and input on proposed design.
- Concerns with removal of the rear door.
- Concerns with the relocation of the interior staircase and its potential visibility through first-floor windows on the western elevation.
- Concerns over the proposed size of the addition at the rear (tertiary) elevation.

After hearing the public comments, the Commissioners discussed public concerns, and added additional comments and recommendations:

- Concerns over the uneven alignment of the proposed balcony in the second-floor addition with the existing deck.
- Recommendation for documentation of the existing rear hardscape and landscaped garden area prior to any improvements being undertaken in this area.
- Recommendation for the bathroom door location facing the backyard on the first floor of the detached accessory structure, to align with the archway of the proposed vestibule.
- Recommendation to provide a gate similar to that at the front driveway on the property, at the rear of the carport detached accessory structure.
- Recommendation that trash bins are required to be stored on-site, rather than within the alley right-of-way.

Following the discussion, a motion was made by the Commission and passed by a vote, to Continue the item to date certain of January 31, 2023. In the motion the Commission outlined concerns to be addressed prior to the January CHC, and that at least one (1) meeting take place between the applicant, the property owner, City staff and members of the public, to address expressed design concerns.

## **DISCUSSION**

On December 14, 2022, City staff, the applicant, the property owner, and members of both the Bluff Park Neighborhood Association (BPNA) and Long Beach Heritage (LBH) met virtually to discuss the project. In conclusion:

- The applicant and property owner explained the reasons for the addition and the project design.
- The applicant explained the extensive research of Irving Gill and the building that had been undertaken for the project which led to proposed interior and exterior improvements.
- BPNA suggested that a breezeway or a "hyphen" be added to further separate the existing from the proposed new addition.

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A second virtual meeting was held on December 28, 2022, between City staff, the applicant and members of the BPNA and LBH to review revised conceptual plans. Below summarizes the second meeting:

- The applicant shared that a site visit and tour of the building with a representative from the Gill foundation had taken place on December 15, 2022.
- Applicant explained that the existing staircase conditions are unsafe, which is the reason for relocation.
- Applicant verified that the staircase will be floating, with minimum separation of four (4) inches from the existing windows.
- Applicant described evidence documenting that the bathrooms had been relocated over time, due to Gill's design with incorporating skylights. One (1) such example is a skylight currently located above the second story closet and laundry.
- BPNA and LBH provided additional feedback on the proposed hyphen, which the architect had introduced in the revised design.

In response to the comments expressed during the CHC meeting, and the two (2) follow-up virtual meetings, the newly-revised plans include: a 750 square-foot two-story addition to the rear of the tertiary elevation with a new "hyphen" separating the massing of the rear addition. The National Park Service (NPS) recommends keeping additions smaller in proportion to the historic building. Furthermore, NPS recommends limiting the size and number of openings between the old and new through the incorporation of a "hyphen". As proposed, the "hyphen" provides a visual distinction between the two building components. The addition now measures approximately 21-feet 10-inches in height, which is 3-feet 5-inches lower in height in comparison to the highest point of the dwelling (25 foot 1 7/8 inches), and one (1) foot lower than rear elevation. The hyphen includes vertical windows which are approximately 2-foot 6-inch wide and is 6-inches lower in height than the proposed addition, and incorporates a 2-foot wide by 9-foot 6-inch high wood fixed window on the first and second stories of the east and west elevations of the addition (Attachment B – Plans). The western side elevation retains the 1-foot recess included in the previous design helping to further differentiate the addition from the original. The addition will incorporate an interior remodel of the residence, as well as a new family room on the first floor, and an additional bedroom at the second floor.

The addition proposes a smooth stucco exterior finish, and windows matching the existing on the tertiary elevation. On the western elevation, two (2) casement windows with transoms are proposed, one (1) on each story that match the existing structure (Sheet A-202). Two (2) pairs of French doors are proposed along the first floor of the east elevation, with a 6-foot-6-inch wide ventless chimney located between the French doors, with a projection of 2-feet. One (1) pair of French doors on the second floor of the east elevation will provide access to a 13 square-foot deck that will be constructed directly above the ventless chimney and will include simple railing (Sheet A-201). The northern (rear) elevation includes a fixed casement window with transoms above to match the existing windows on the dwelling. The large window as proposed on the tertiary elevation is inappropriate and does not comply with the Secretary of The Interior Standards (SIS) as this window is a duplicate of the front main elevation, which is inconsistent with Gill's clearly defined hierarchy of elevations. A condition of approval has been included to

require a simplified window on the rear tertiary elevation to ensure consistency with the SIS. The proposed addition will require placement modification of two existing casement windows on the second floor of the tertiary elevation. The modifications will include shifting the large casement window further east to accommodate the addition. The second smaller casement window will be removed and relocated to the rear of the second-floor addition.

Further revisions to the previous design include retention of the existing rear archway on first floor of the tertiary elevation and incorporation of it as an entryway into the new family room. That rear door will be reused as the bathroom door located north of the original location and will be recorded in photographs and drawings, thus allowing for future restoration. Additional modifications include the replacement of French doors on the existing second floor as well as the wrought iron railing on the deck area (Sheet A-100). Per a discussion amongst the applicant and the representative to the Gill Foundation, it was determined that the French doors were not original, and would have originally incorporated windows matching the primary dwelling. Further examination of the decks for aligning the existing and proposed areas, due to the grade difference proved infeasible. Hence, Gill's differentiation and hierarchy of elevations through architectural detail will be maintained, including the solid-to-void relationships, and asymmetry of the rear elevation.

To further address the Commission's concerns on the detached accessory structure, the door leading into the half bathroom on the first floor has been shifted further west to align with the archway of the vestibule. The proposed carport attached to the east of the garage, will also include a decorative wrought iron gate matching the style found on the principal structure's porte-cochere. As a Condition of Approval (CoA 16), the property owner has agreed to document the rear landscaping with photos and detailed architectural drawings, prior to any improvements, as well as store trash bins inside of the private residence and not the right-of-way per Condition 17 (Attachment C – Conditions of Approval).

### **SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR STANDARDS CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS**

In compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (the Standards), staff has analyzed the proposed project and determined that the project meets these requirements as follows:

- 1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.**

The proposed project will not change the use of the property. The property will remain a residence.

- 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.**

No modifications are proposed for the primary elevation. Minor alterations to the rear (tertiary) elevation of the dwelling will occur to accommodate the two-story expansion. The project will relocate one (1) rear door to the proposed bathroom north of the original location which will be documented and reused. As these features are located on the tertiary elevation, they are of less significance, than those on the primary or secondary elevations. As conditioned, the proposed addition will require placement modification of two existing casement windows on the second floor of the tertiary elevation. The modifications will include shifting the large casement window further the east to accommodate the addition. The second smaller casement window will be removed and relocated to the rear of the second-floor addition.

The existing two-car garage will remain and will be structurally retrofitted to allow the construction of the ADU on the second floor. Additional accessory space and a third garage space has been included as a part of this project, and will not affect the historic characteristics of the primary building as a Contributor to the Bluff Park Historic District.

- 3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.**

The proposed project has been designed to be compatible with the architectural style of the historic dwelling, while incorporating design features to differentiate the new construction. The northern (rear) elevation includes a fixed casement window with transoms above to match the existing windows on the dwelling. The large window as proposed on the tertiary elevation is inappropriate and does not comply with the Secretary of The Interior Standards as this window is a duplicate of the front main elevation, which is inconsistent with Gill's clearly defined hierarchy of elevations. A condition of approval has been included to require a simplified window on the rear tertiary elevation to ensure consistency with the SIS.

- 4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.**

No change-over-time has been noted.

- 5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.**

The project will relocate one (1) rear door to the proposed bathroom north of the original location which will be documented and reused. While the smallest second-story window requires removal. The proposed addition will require placement modification of two existing casement windows on the second floor of the tertiary elevation. The modifications will include shifting the large casement window further the east to

accommodate the addition. The second smaller casement window will be removed and relocated to the rear of the second-floor addition.

- 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 project does not include removal of any deteriorated historic features.

- 7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.**

Not applicable. No chemical or physical treatments are proposed.

- 8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.**

No known archeological resources are located at this property. However, if archeological resources are encountered during excavation and demolition, they will be treated as deemed appropriate.

- 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.**

The proposed project has been designed to be compatible with the Irving Gill historic residence, while including design features to differentiate the new construction by a lower building height, and a hyphen to separate the addition from the existing residence. A newly minted coin will be embedded into the corner of the new addition. The project will relocate one (1) rear door to the proposed bathroom north of the original location which will be documented and reused. The addition and new garage are compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features of the original home. The northern (rear) elevation includes a fixed casement window with transoms above to match the existing windows on the dwelling. The large window as proposed on the tertiary elevation is inappropriate and does not comply with the Secretary of The Interior Standards as this window is a duplicate of the front main elevation, which is inconsistent with Gill's clearly defined hierarchy of elevations. A condition of approval has been included to require a simplified window on the rear tertiary elevation to ensure consistency with the SIS.

**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 new addition to the rear of the dwelling and new detached construction could be removed in the future without destroying the essential form and integrity of the historic property or its environment. The project will relocate one (1) rear door to the proposed bathroom north of the original location which will be documented and reused such that if restoration is planned in the future, it can be returned to its original location. The proposed addition will require placement modification of two existing casement windows on the second floor of the tertiary elevation. The modifications will include shifting the large casement window further the east to accommodate the addition. The second smaller casement window will be removed and relocated to the rear of the second-floor addition.

**The Bluff Park Historic District Ordinance states:**

- All exterior modifications require compliance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
  - Project conforms, as indicated above.
- New construction in the District conforms to the bulk and mass, scale, and height of the majority of existing structures on both sides of the street on the block on which the new structure is to be erected.
  - The new construction will not be visible in any direction.
- The style of architecture, the use of materials and the landscape treatment shall not be uncharacteristically different from the predominant style for the immediate surroundings.
  - The proposed addition incorporates materials of the Irving Gill dwelling.
- New structures shall not be painted or otherwise finished on the exterior in colors and architectural details which would be out of character with the general architecture style of the predominant on the block on which the new structure is to be located.
  - The materials and colors proposed are consistent with this historic home.
- Driveways and garage entrances shall conform to the existing standard on the block on which the new building is erected.
  - The driveway as proposed will be restored back to its original conditions and the garage addition will match the existing detached garages architectural style, mass, size and existing location.

**The project incorporates the principles of the Bluff Park Historic District Design Guidelines as follows:**

- The addition should not envelop or be larger than the existing building and should be no wider than the existing footprint.
  - The addition is significantly smaller than the existing dwelling.
- Rear additions should not be taller than the existing roofline.

- The rear addition has a lower height than the historic residence. The addition measures approximately 21-feet 10-inches in height, which is approximately 3-feet 5-inches lower in height in comparison to the highest point of the dwelling (25 foot 1 7/8 inches) and one (1) foot lower than rear elevation of the existing building. An approximately 2-foot 6-inch hyphen has now been incorporated to separate the massing of the rear two story addition and is 6-inches lower in height than the proposed addition.
- The addition should be planned and constructed in a way that does not involve removing, obstructing, or damaging any existing historic features.
  - As previously stated, the project will relocate one door to the proposed bathroom north of the original location which will be documented and reused. Only the small second story window is proposed to be removed and relocated to second floor rear addition to keep the original features within the structure.
- All additions should be compatible with, yet distinguishable from the original building.
  - The proposed project has been designed to be compatible with the architectural style of the historic dwelling while incorporating design features to differentiate the new construction. An approximately 2-foot 6-inch hyphen will separate the proposed addition on the tertiary elevation, and will be 6-inches lower in height than the proposed addition.
- Additions should always add to the existing footprint of the building; new construction should never involve removal of a portion of the original residence or site features.

As previously stated, the project will relocate one (1) door to the proposed bathroom north of the original location which will be documented and reused. The proposed addition will require placement modification of two existing casement windows on the second floor of the tertiary elevation. The modifications will include shifting the large casement window further the east to accommodate the addition. The second smaller casement window will be removed and relocated to the rear of the second-floor addition.

The two-story addition to the rear of the existing dwelling, the new garage, and the expanded accessory structures conform the requirements of the Secretary of Interior Standards, the Bluff Park Historic District Ordinance and Design Guidelines. The project will maintain an appropriate building scale compatible with the context of both the Historic District, and the immediate block. The addition and new detached accessory structures have been designed to be compatible with the existing home. As proposed, this project will not adversely affect the overall character of the Historic District and will blend into the surrounding neighborhood.

### **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 City of Long Beach Municipal Code, the *Secretary of the Interiors' Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, the Bluff Park Historic District Ordinance, and the Bluff Park Historic District Design Guidelines (Attachment D - Findings).



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With the recommended Special Conditions, staff supports approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness request. All the Findings can be made in the affirmative for the proposed improvements, as these improvements are compatible in overall scale, massing, proportions, materials, and colors to the existing building on the property and in the context of the Historic District. 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 (a) (new construction or conversion of small structures) of the CEQA Guidelines. No further environmental review is required.

### **PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

Public notices were originally distributed on November 11, 2022. A total of 36 letters were received in response to this project. As this project was continued to a date certain, re-noticing of this project is not required.

Respectfully submitted,



SERGIO GUTIERREZ  
PROJECT PLANNER



ALEJANDRO PLASCENCIA  
PRESERVATION PLANNER



ANDRÉA URBAS, AICP CEP CUD  
ACTING ADVANCE PLANNING OFFICER



ALISON SPINDLER-RUIZ, AICP  
PLANNING BUREAU MANAGER

Attachments: Attachment A – November 29, 2022 Staff Report  
Attachment B – Revised Plans  
Attachment C – Conditions of Approval  
Attachment D – Findings