



Bluff Park Neighborhood Association

January 30, 2023

Kathleen Irvine, Chair
Cultural Heritage Commission
City of Long Beach
411 W. Ocean Boulevard
Long Beach, California 90802

RE: Agenda Item 23-002CH - 2749 E. Ocean Boulevard in the Bluff Park Historic District: Request for Certificate of Appropriateness to Allow a 2-Story Addition to the Rear of the Existing Contributing Single-Family Home

Dear Chair Irvine, Vice Chair McGuan, and Commissioners Bodek, Grisafe, Hinds, Hunter, and Ramos:

Coming before you at this week's meeting of the City of Long Beach Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) is the continuance and revised submission of a proposal located at 2749 E. Ocean Boulevard for a 750 square-foot, two-story rear addition, located in the Bluff Park Historic District in the 2nd Council District. The 1918 contributing building is highly significant and nationally recognized as one of the very few existing homes – and currently perhaps the best-preserved – by renown, groundbreaking architect Irving John Gill (1870-1936).

Understanding that the current homeowner, Goma Elbiali, desires and is rightfully, according to all abiding standards, ordinances and guidelines, able to make a rear addition to his home, and that such an addition has the potential to be largely (though perhaps not fully nor easily) reversed in the future to better preserve the overall integrity of this potentially landmarkable building, the Board of Directors of the Bluff Park Neighborhood Association (BPNA) **accepts and supports** the current revised plans for the hyphenated rear addition, dated January 3, 2023, along with the related Staff Report and Conditions of Approval.

The BPNA board is most grateful for the CHC's unusual and important decision, as we asked, to delay approval at the hearing on November 29, 2022, to allow us in the BPNA and Long Beach Heritage, as key historic preservation stakeholders and representatives, the opportunity to connect with the property owner, architect, City planners, and Long Beach Development Services (LBDS) leadership to discuss proposed plans; gather information; share differing perspectives, goals, and timelines; and provide input and ideas on various strategies and options. The result being presented to you this week is one of significant revision with feedback.

Being that such a step was missing prior to this property's last hearing, your highly commendable and much appreciated action helped recognize and elevate the importance of engagement, collaboration and discussions with leaders (boards) of the city's historic districts' neighborhood associations and Long Beach Heritage. We believe these organizations have commonly held missions and goals in alignment with the hardworking staff in Long Beach Development Services and with you as honorable commissioners serving on the CHC -- all of us working together to uphold the City's Historic Districts' *Ordinances* and *Design Guidelines*, City Charter, and National Park Service's *The Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

As demonstrated here, while the outcomes of any project do not always reflect the pure needs, desires and goals of any individual entity or perspective, the process itself leads to better mutual understanding,

Bluff Park Neighborhood Association

Cultural Heritage Commission Agenda Item 23-002CH

January 30, 2023

Page 2

compromise, and relationship-building and win-win endings that value and benefit all entities and better serve the city in the longer term. We realize that the last few months seemed to bring out some contentious moments and difficult conversations over an extended period of time; however, we believe that that process represents a kind of "best or ideal practice" to be initiated early on in development projects across the city, especially for the sensitive assets in historic districts and for historic or potentially landmark structures citywide.

Now for more than 50 years, the BPNA's Board represents the collective voice of those who live, own, and rent in the Bluff Park Historic District, which was established by the Long Beach City Council 40 years ago and which is generally bounded by E. Ocean Boulevard to E. Broadway and by Junipero Avenue to Loma Avenue.

The BPNA is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity with a mission of historic preservation and cohesion. The association serves to foster a sense of unity, collaboration, community service, and goodwill for all of the city; to protect, preserve, safeguard, and beautify the Bluff Park Historic District; and to support its neighborhood residents, visitors, and environment.

Thank you for the consideration of this letter and for the important, impactful work you do and the decisions you make!

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Mallin

BPNA President

cc via email: Cindy Allen, Vice Mayor and 2nd District Councilwoman, City of Long Beach
Christopher Koontz, Director, City of Long Beach Development Services
Alison Spindler-Ruiz, Manager, Planning Bureau, City of Long Beach Development Services
Andréas Urbas, Acting Advance Planning Officer, Planning Bureau, City of Long Beach Development Services
Sergio Gutierrez, Planner, Planning Bureau, City of Long Beach Development Services
Alejandro Plascencia, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning Bureau, City of Long Beach Development Services
Gina Casillas, Planner, Planning Bureau, City of Long Beach Development Services
Chris Hogan, President, Long Beach Heritage
Manuel Valenzuela, Acting Executive Director, Long Beach Heritage
Louise Ivers, Vice President of Advocacy, Long Beach Heritage
Goma Elbiali, Homeowner, 2749 E. Ocean Boulevard
Nagy Bakhoun, Principal Architect, Obelisk Architects
Michelle Arend-Ekhoff, Lead, Long Beach Historic Districts' Leaders Group
James B. Guthrie, Founder and President, Irving J. Gill Foundation
Marco Pizzo, Vice President of Events and Fundraising, Bluff Park Neighborhood Association