



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: August 16, 2023

TO: Hearing Officer

SUBJECT: Variance for Historic Resources #11972

LOCATION: 110 East Holly Street

APPLICANT: Architectural Resources Group

ZONING DESIGNATION: CD-1 AD-1 (Central District Specific Plan, Old Pasadena Subdistrict, Alcohol Density Overlay)

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: Medium Mixed Use

CASE PLANNER: Alison Walker

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the Environmental Determination and Specific Findings in Attachment A to **approve** Variance for Historic Resources #11972 with the conditions in Attachment B.

PROJECT PROPOSAL: Variance for Historic Resources: To allow a 10'-3" ground floor height where a minimum of 15 feet is required. The request for relief is associated with the adaptive reuse of a historic resource that is being converted from an Office, Administrative Business Professional use to a Communications Facility use.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: This project has been determined to be exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code §21080(b)(9); Administrative Code, Title 14, Chapter 3, §15303, Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) and there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class; therefore, there are no unusual circumstances. Section 15303 specifically exempts the conversion of small structures. The proposed project would facilitate the adaptive reuse of an existing office building as a communications facility, no expansion to the existing building is proposed.

Pursuant to Section 15300.2.f of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, a categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. A substantial adverse change includes demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration such that the significance of an historical resource would be impaired. The CEQA Guidelines also further provide that a project that demolishes or alters those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance (i.e., its character-defining features) can be considered to materially impair the resource's significance. The property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 as an individual resource and in 1983 as a contributor to the Old Pasadena Historic District. The property is significant as one of the last remaining and one of the best-preserved examples of the non-mechanized era of transportation in Southern California. The proposed project includes interior modifications and minor exterior changes that will not affect the historic exterior, including barn doors reminiscent of its original use. Based on the scope of work, the project as proposed, is not anticipated to cause a substantial adverse change to a historical resource.

BACKGROUND:

Site characteristics:

The project site is a 10,370 square-foot parcel bounded by East Holly Street to the north and Legge Alley to the west. The site is improved with a 6,612 square-foot, two-story commercial building and rear courtyard. The existing brick building was originally constructed in 1904 as a livery stable used for both horses and vehicles and is an individually listed historic resource. The building was most recently occupied by an Office, Administrative Business Professional land use.

Adjacent Uses:

North – Open Space/Park
South – Retail/Restaurant
East – Commercial
West – Multi-Family Residential, Retail/Restaurant

Adjacent Zoning:

North – OS (Open Space)
South – CD-1 AD-1 (Central District Specific Plan, Old Pasadena Subdistrict, Alcohol Density Overlay)
East – CD-1 AD-1 (Central District Specific Plan, Old Pasadena Subdistrict, Alcohol Density Overlay)
West – CD-1 AD-1 (Central District Specific Plan, Old Pasadena Subdistrict, Alcohol Density Overlay)

Previous zoning cases on this property:

Certificate of Exception #186 – A Certificate of Exception to allow a lot line adjustment. Approved in 1992.

Exception #9642 – To allow Thieves Gallery, The Pasadena Auction Gallery, and Josephina's Restaurant to collectively use a parking lot

containing 64 spaces. Josephina's restaurant would provide 31 additional spaces, exclusively for its use. Approved January 30, 1980.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The applicant, Architectural Resources Group, on behalf of the property owner, has submitted a Variance for Historic Resources application to allow a ground floor height of 10'-3" where a minimum of 15 feet is required. The request for relief is associated with the adaptive reuse of a designated historic resource that is being converted from Office, Administrative Business Professional use to a Communications Facility use.

The proposed project would include an interior remodel that would reconfigure the interior of the existing two-story building and provide for two usable floors for the new use with a recording space and associated offices as well as new landscaping, seismic, mechanical, electrical, and lighting upgrades. As part of these improvements, the existing 12'-6" ground floor height would be lowered to 10'-3" and the existing second floor will be reconfigured to accommodate the new use.

BACKGROUND:

The subject site was originally developed in 1904 as a livery stable with a 9'-6" ground floor height. The property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 25, 1979, as an individual resource, and on September 15, 1983, as a contributor to the Old Pasadena Historic District. The building has been modified overtime; most recently, in 1993, a building permit was issued for a remodel. During the remodel, the second story was expanded to 1,876 square feet and reconstructed with a 12'-6" ground floor height.

ANALYSIS:

Zoning and Land Use

The subject property is located in the CD-1 AD-1 (Central District Specific Plan, Old Pasadena Subdistrict, Alcohol Density Overlay) zone. This subdistrict is intended to maintain and reinforce the historic character of the area, and to support its long-term viability as a regional retail and entertainment attraction through the development of complementary uses, including medium to high-density housing near light rail stations. The proposed Communications Facility land use is permitted by-right pursuant to Table 3-5 (Allowed Uses and Permit Requirements for CD Zoning Districts) of Zoning Code Section 17.30.030 (CD District Land Uses and Permit Requirements).

Pursuant to Table 3-2 (CD District General Development Standards), Section 17.30.040 (CD General Development Standards), the minimum height of the ground floor of all non-residential buildings shall be 15 feet. The applicant has requested a Variance for Historic Resources to allow the proposed ground floor height for the purpose of reusing the historic building. No changes are proposed that would affect the building's compliance with requirements for floor area, setbacks, or building height.

Variance for Historic Resources: To allow a ground floor height of 10'-3" where a minimum of 15 feet is required

Pursuant to Zoning Code Section 17.61.080.H (Variances – Variances for Historic Resources), a Variance for Historic Resources is intended to accommodate historic resources that are

undergoing adaptive reuse. This unique type of Variance is designed to provide relief from the strict compliance with the development standards of this Zoning Code that may impair the ability of a historic resource to be properly used for adaptive reuse. Adaptive use is the reuse of a structure with a new use different from that for which the structure was originally constructed. The Variance only applies if the property has a historic designation or if the property is determined to be eligible for designation by the Design and Historic Preservation Section and completes the landmark designation process. The subject property is a designated individual historic resource.

The Hearing Officer may approve a Variance for Historic Resources to allow a reduced ground floor height requirement only after making three findings identified in the Zoning Code:

- 1) *The Variance for Historic Resource is necessary to facilitate the appropriate use of an existing designated historic structure;*
- 2) *The Variance for Historic Resource would not adversely impact property within the neighborhood or historic district; and,*
- 3) *Granting the Variance for Historic Resource application would be in conformance with the goals, policies, and objectives of the General Plan and the purpose and intent of any applicable specific plan.*

The applicant proposes to convert the interior of the historic building (historically used as a livery stable) to a communications facility use. The existing ground floor height of 12'-6" in conjunction with a 16'-2" top plate height and pitched gable roof, creates a low second story height that places limitations on the use of the upper level. The proposed project would reconfigure and lower the existing ceiling height of the first floor, facilitating the use of the two-story space by the communications facility without creating additional floor area, building volume, or significant changes to the structure. The Central District is the primary business, financial, retailing, and government center of the City. The Old Pasadena subdistrict is intended to maintain and reinforce the historic character of the area, and to support its long-term viability as a regional retail and entertainment attraction through the development of complementary uses, including medium to high-density housing near light rail stations. The proposed communications facility use with recording space would be an appropriate use for the area as it adds to the diversity of uses in the Central District and it enhances the cultural character of the area. Furthermore, the proposed 10'-3" ground floor ceiling height would be reminiscent of the historic livery's original 9'-6" ground floor height, rather than the presently existing 12'-6" height that was established in 1993. Therefore, the Variance for Historic Resource is necessary to facilitate the use of the existing historic structure.

Granting the Variance for Historic Resources would not impact property within the neighborhood. The project would maintain its existing setbacks, heights, would not increase floor area, and would not affect views, sight lines, bulk, and mass. The project mainly consists of interior renovations including the reconfiguration of the existing second floor. Exterior improvements are limited to new landscaping in the rear courtyard area, a new skylight and roof opening alterations. The proposed exterior improvements comply with the applicable requirements. It is anticipated that the relief from the 15-foot ground floor height requirement would have no noticeable effect on surrounding properties because there would be minimal exterior modification. Furthermore, the rehabilitation of the existing historic resource and conversion to the communication facility use would occur in compliance with all applicable building and fire codes. The remodel would also require compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings through the required Design Review process, which is included as a recommended condition of approval.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:

The site is designated Medium Mixed-Use (0.0-2.25 FAR, 0-87 du/acre) in the General Plan Land Use Element. Sites with this designation are intended to support the development of multi-story buildings with a variety of compatible commercial and residential uses. The proposed Communications Facility land use would be consistent with this designation because it provides commercial use within an existing two-story building. A Guiding Principle of the Land Use Element of the General Plan is that Pasadena's historic resources will be preserved. Goal 8 (Historic Preservation) seeks the preservation and enhancement of Pasadena's cultural and historic buildings as valued assets and important representations of its past. The adaptive reuse of the site would ensure the preservation of an individual resource. Policy 10.6 (Adaptive Reuse) encourages adaptive reuse of structures, including non-historic structures, as a means of supporting environmental sustainability. The project site includes an historic resource, which would be adaptively re-used as part of the proposed project. This approach respects the General Plan's goals of not only protecting historic resources but restoring and enabling continued economic and environmental value of such resources. The proposed project would allow the existing resource to be rehabilitated and appropriately modernized to reduce the risk of deterioration that may otherwise occur.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

This project has been determined to be exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code §21080(b)(9); Administrative Code, Title 14, Chapter 3, §15303, Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) and there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class; therefore, there are no unusual circumstances. Section 15303 specifically exempts the conversion of small structures. The proposed project would facilitate the adaptive reuse of an existing commercial building, and no expansion to the existing building is proposed.

Pursuant to Section 15300.2.f of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, a categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. A substantial adverse change includes demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration such that the significance of an historical resource would be impaired. The CEQA Guidelines also further provide that a project that demolishes or alters those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance (i.e., its character-defining features) can be considered to materially impair the resource's significance. The property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 as an individual resource and in 1983 as a contributor to the Old Pasadena Historic District. The property is significant as one of the last remaining and one of the best-preserved examples of the non-mechanized era of transportation in Southern California. The proposed project includes interior modifications and minor exterior changes that will not affect the historic exterior and barn doors reminiscent of its original use. Based on the scope of work, the project as proposed, is not anticipated to cause a substantial adverse change to a historical resource.

REVIEW BY OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS:

The Building and Safety Division, Design and Historic Preservation Division, and Departments of Fire and Public Works had the opportunity to review the proposal. Based on their review of the project, the Building and Safety Division and Design and Historic Preservation Section provided recommended conditions of approval, which are included in Attachment B.

CONCLUSION:

It is staff's assessment that the findings necessary for approving the Variance for Historic Resources can be made. Except for the ground floor height, the proposed rehabilitation meets all applicable development standards required by the Zoning Code. Granting the request would facilitate the use of a designated historic structure without adversely impacting property in the neighborhood or historic district. The proposed project does not include modification to the existing building footprint or additional floor area. Furthermore, the project is consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan. As such, staff recommends that the Hearing Officer adopt the environmental determination and the specific findings in Attachment A to approve the application with the conditions in Attachment B.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: Specific Findings for Variance for Historic Resources
Attachment B: Recommended Conditions of Approval

ATTACHMENT A
SPECIFIC FINDINGS FOR VARIANCE FOR HISTORIC RESOURCES #11972

Variance for Historic Resources: To allow a ground floor height of 10'-3" where a minimum of 15 feet is required

1. *The Variance for Historic Resource is necessary to facilitate the appropriate use of an existing designated historic structure.* The applicant proposes to convert the interior of the historic building (historically used as a livery stable) to a communications facility use. The existing ground floor height of 12'-6" in conjunction a 16'-2" top plate height and pitched gable roof creates a low second story height that places limitations on the use of the upper level. The proposed project will reconfigure and lower the existing first floor ceiling height, facilitating the use of the second-story space by the communications facility, without creating additional floor area, building volume, or significant changes to the structure. The Central District is the primary business, financial, retailing, and government center of the City. The Old Pasadena subdistrict is intended to maintain and reinforce the historic character of the area, and to support its long-term viability as a regional retail and entertainment attraction through the development of complementary uses, including medium to high-density housing near light rail stations. The proposed communications facility use with recording space is an appropriate use for the area as it adds to the diversity of uses in the Central District and it enhances the cultural character of the area. Furthermore, the proposed 10'-3" ground floor ceiling height will be reminiscent of the historic livery's original 9'-6" ground floor height, rather than the presently existing 12'-6" height that was established in 1993. Therefore, the Variance for Historic Resource is necessary to facilitate the use of the existing designated historic structure.
2. *The Variance for Historic Resource would not adversely impact property within the neighborhood or historic district.* Granting this Variance for Historic Resources for a 10'3" ground floor height will not impact property within the neighborhood. The project will maintain the existing setbacks, height, will not increase floor area, and will not affect views, sight lines, bulk, and mass. The project consists of an interior remodel and the reconfiguration of the existing second floor to provide for usable space for the new use without creating additional floor area, building volume, or significant changes to the structure. It is anticipated that the interior remodel will have no noticeable effect on surrounding properties because the rehabilitation of the existing historic resource will occur in compliance with all applicable building and fire codes. Further the project will require Design Review to demonstrate compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.
3. *Granting the Variance for Historic Resource application would be in conformance with the goals, policies, and objectives of the General Plan and the purpose and intent of any applicable specific plan.* A Guiding Principle of the Land Use Element of the General Plan is that Pasadena's historic resources will be preserved. Goal 8 (Historic Preservation) seeks the preservation and enhancement of Pasadena's cultural and historic buildings as valued assets and important representations of its past. The adaptive reuse of the site will ensure the preservation of an individual resource. Policy 10.6 (Adaptive Reuse) encourages adaptive reuse of structures, including non-historic structures, as a means of supporting environmental sustainability. The project site includes an historic resource, which will be adaptively re-used as part of the proposed project. This approach respects the General Plan's goals of not only protecting historic resources but restoring and enabling continued economic and environmental value of such resources. The proposed project will allow the existing resource to be rehabilitated and appropriately modernized to reduce the risk of deterioration that may

otherwise occur. Therefore, the proposed project will be in conformance with the General Plan and Central District Specific Plan.

ATTACHMENT B
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL FOR VARIANCE FOR HISTORIC RESOURCES #11972

The applicant or successor in interest shall meet the following conditions:

General

1. The site plan, floor plan, elevations, and building sections submitted for building permits shall substantially conform to plans stamped "Approved at Hearing, August 16, 2023," except as modified herein.
2. The right granted under this application must be enacted within 36 months from the effective date of approval. It shall expire and become void, unless an extension of time is approved in compliance with Section 17.64.040.C of the Zoning Code.
3. The approval of this application allows a ground floor height of 10'-3" in conjunction with the adaptive reuse of an existing historic building for a Communications Facility land use as depicted on the approved site plan.
4. The applicant or successor in interest shall meet the applicable code requirements of all City Departments.
5. The final decision letter and conditions of approval shall be incorporated in the submitted building plans as part of the building plan check process.
6. The proposed project, Activity Number **ZENT2023-00056**, is subject to the Inspection Program by the City. A Final Zoning Inspection is required for your project prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy or approval of the Final Building Inspection. Contact Alison Walker, Current Planning Section, at (626) 744-6742 to schedule an inspection appointment time.

Planning Division

7. The applicant or successor in interest shall comply with all requirements of Municipal Code Chapter 9.36 (Noise Restrictions). Specifically, all construction activities shall adhere to Municipal Code Section 9.36.070 (Construction Projects) and Section 9.36.080 (Construction Equipment).
8. Any above-ground mechanical equipment shall comply with the screening requirements of Section 17.40.150 (Screening) of the Zoning Code.
9. Should this project meet the threshold for state-mandated water-efficient landscaping, the final landscape plans (inclusive of planting and hardscape plans, the planting pallet, drainage plan, and irrigation system plan(s) and specifications), shall be reviewed by Planning and Community Development Department staff for conformance with the standards and requirements specified within the 2015 California Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELo) prior to the issuance of a building permit. No certificate of occupancy shall be issued until such plans have been deemed compliant with the MWELo and the landscaping has been installed per such approved MWELo-compliant plans to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Community Development or his/her designee.

Design and Historic Preservation Section

9. The proposed exterior changes will require Design Review pursuant to PMC Section 17.61.030 to be conducted by Design & Historic Preservation staff. As part of the Design Review process, the project will need to demonstrate compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

Building and Safety Division

10. Governing Codes: Comply with the Current Edition of California Building Code, California Electrical Code, California Plumbing Code, California Mechanical Code, California Energy Code, California Green Building Standard Code and the City of Pasadena Municipal Code. The governing edition is based on the date in which the project is submitted to the City of Pasadena for review. Clarify the scope of work to include the change of occupancy and clearly specify the occupancy groups for each unit and occupant load accordingly. All construction documents shall be prepared by a registered design professional; stamp and sign all plans.
11. Building Code Analysis: Provide a Building Code Analysis on the title sheet. Include the code(s) information for each building proposed: Descriptive scope of work, occupancy, assessor's parcel number, number of stories, type of construction, fire sprinklers, floor area, height, and allowable floor area. Roof drainage for the "Roof Court" shall comply with Section 1101.12.1 and Section 1101.12.2 of the 2019 CPC. Provide a plumbing occupant load and fixtures analysis per 2022 CPC. Specify that each "single-user toilet room" door has a locking mechanism controlled by the user and that the main door leading to the "All-gender Restroom" does not have a locking mechanism.
12. Soils Report Required: A soils engineer report is require for: Second (2nd) story addition to existing one-story building.
13. Green Code: Photocopy to plans and complete the 2022 CALIFORNIA GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS CODE WITH CITY OF PASADENA AMENDMENTS FORMS. These forms are being provided attach and can be found at <https://www.cityofpasadena.net/planning/building-and-safety/bs-applications-forms/#informational-handouts>.
14. Means of Egress (Exiting): Provide an egress plan showing compliance with all requirements for the exit access, the exit and the exit discharged detailed in chapter 10. Clearly label and identify on plans fire-resistive corridors, exit enclosures, exit passageways, horizontal exits, occupancy separation walls and floors, fire resistive shafts, and fire walls, along with their fire-resistive ratings as applicable. Primary accessible path of travel shall include a primary entrance to the building or facility; toilet and bathing facilities serving the area; drinking fountains serving the area; public telephones serving the area, and signs.
15. Fire and Smoke Protection Features: Show materials, systems and assemblies used for structural fire resistance and fire-resistance-rated construction separation of adjacent spaces to safeguard against the spread of fire and smoke within a building and the spread of fire to or from buildings.
16. Accessibility: Provide compliance with accessibility per CBC Chapter 11B. Provide an analysis for the minimum required units and parking spaces. Provide the minimum VAN accessible parking required. Fully dimension and detail to show compliance. Note on plans: "COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY ACT (ADA) IS SOLELY THE

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OWNER/DESIGNER. THE CITY OF PASADENA ASSUMES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ADA COMPLIANCE.” Clearly detail all accessible requirement for bathroom stall at the “All-gender restroom” and the private restroom serving office 107. Minimum toilet room clearance shall be greater than 66 inches to comply with the toe clearance exception per CBC 11B-604.8.1.4. Show Maneuvering clearance at swing doors, gates, sliding doors, folding doors and doorways without doors.

17. Required Plans and Permit(s): In addition to architectural plans, provide Structural, Shoring, Plumbing, Mechanical, Electrical plans, PV systems and grading plans as required. No deferred submittal. Separate permits are required for the following: Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, Fire Sprinkler, Demolition, Block walls, others. New ePermitting services. Visit the city website at: <https://www.cityofpasadena.net/planning/permit-center/permit-center-online/>