



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: September 6, 2023

TO: Hearing Officer

SUBJECT: Variance for Historic Resources #11971

LOCATION: 171 South Grand Avenue

APPLICANT: Shakespeare Club of Pasadena

ZONING DESIGNATION: RS-4 HD (Single-Family Residential, 0-4 dwelling units per acre, Hillside Development Overlay)

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: Low Density Residential (0-6 dwelling units per acre)

CASE PLANNER: Katherine Moran

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the Environmental Determination and Specific Findings in Attachment A to **approve** Variance for Historic Resources #11971 with the conditions in Attachment B.

PROJECT PROPOSAL: Variance for Historic Resources: To allow two existing driveway entry gates at the north and south side of the building with heights of 8'-2" and 8'-4", where the maximum height permitted by the Zoning Code is six feet. A Variance for Historic Resource is required to allow a gate to exceed the maximum permitted height. The property is located within the RS-4 HD (Single-Family Residential, 0-4 dwelling units per acre, Hillside Development Overlay) zoning district.

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). 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 construction of accessory structures including

driveway entry gates. The proposed project would allow the continuation and adaptive reuse of an existing building as a social club, 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 a historical resource that convey its historical significance (i.e., its character-defining features) can be considered to materially impair the resource's significance.

The historic character of the property will be retained and preserved, as the proposed project will not remove any distinctive materials or alter any original exterior features, spaces, or spatial relationships that characterize the building. The driveway entry gates will not have potential to destroy extant original materials or features. Based on the scope of work, the project as proposed, is not anticipated to cause a substantial adverse change to a historical resource. Thus, 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 flag shaped lot located on the west side of South Grand Avenue, bounded by West Colorado Boulevard to the north and Arbor Street to the south. The 40,960 square-foot parcel is improved with an 8,580 square-foot two-story building, surface parking lot, and perimeter walls. The original Italian Renaissance Revival style building was designed by Sylvanus Marston and Edgar Maybury for Josephine P. Everett following the death of her husband Henry A. Everett. Henry A. Everett was one of the leading electric street railway experts in the country in the early 1900's. The structure was originally constructed in 1928 as a single-family residence and is a designated historic monument. The building is clad in stucco and covered by a shallow hipped roof with clay tiles. The roof eaves contain sculpted wood rafters. Elaborate classical stone detailing occurs around the entry door and first-story window along the easterly side of the building.

Adjacent Uses:

North – Government, Institutional
South – Single-Family Residential
East – Single-Family Residential and Multi-Family Residential
West – Single-Family Residential and Multi-Family Residential

Adjacent Zoning: North – PS-1 (Public and Semi-Public)
South – RS-4 HD (Single-Family Residential, 0-4 dwelling units per acre, Hillside Development Overlay)
East – RS-4 (Single-Family Residential, 0-4 dwelling units per acre)
West – RS-4 HD (Single-Family Residential, 0-4 dwelling units per acre, Hillside Development Overlay)

Previous zoning cases on this property: Variance #22617: Permit for a special setback for wall adjoining the wall of Vista del Arroyo Hotel. Approved on February 15, 1928.

Variance #8157: To allow for the use of the property as an office. Denied on April 30, 1970.

Conditional Use Permit #654: To allow for the use of the existing two-story, single-family dwelling as a meeting place for the members of the Shakespeare Club. Approved with conditions on February 24, 1972.

Conditional Use Permit #2826 (Modification to CUP #654): To allow for the expansion of an existing nonconforming club/lodge use in a single-family residential district. Continued to June 1, 1994. Withdrawn May 19, 1994.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The applicant, Burke Farrar, on behalf of the Shakespeare Club of Pasadena, has submitted a Variance for Historic Resources application to allow two existing driveway entry gates at the north and south side of the building with heights of 8'-2" and 8'-4", where the maximum height permitted by the Zoning Code is six feet. The request for relief is associated with the continued adaptive reuse of a designated historic monument that was previously converted from a single-family residential use to a Clubs, Lodges, Private Meeting Hall (Shakespeare Club). In order to continue the use of the unpermitted existing driveway entry gates, the applicant is required to obtain approval of the Variance for Historic Resources.

BACKGROUND:

- On April 18, 2018, the Shakespeare Club of Pasadena submitted an application to the Design and Historic Preservation Section requesting individual landmark designation for the Josephine P. Everett House/Shakespeare Club of Pasadena at 171 South Grand Avenue.
- On July 3, 2018, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the application for landmark designation of the property.
- On October 29, 2018, the City Council approved the application for landmark designation.
- On December 10, 2021, the Shakespeare Club of Pasadena submitted an application for designation of the building as a Historic Monument.
- On March 15, 2022, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the designation as a Historic Monument.
- On June 13, 2022, the City Council approved the designation as a Historic Monument.

ANALYSIS:

Zoning and Land Use

The subject property is located within the RS-4 HD (Single-Family Residential, 0-4 dwelling units per acre, Hillside Development Overlay) zoning district. The Hillside Overlay district is intended to provide development standards that promote orderly development consistent with the traditional scale and character of the community, and that preserve privacy and views. Residential uses are allowed in this zoning district. The adaptive reuse of the property from a single-family residence to a Clubs, Lodges, Private Meeting Hall land use (Shakespeare Club of Pasadena) was approved in 1972 through the Conditional Use Permit process. Clubs, Lodges Private Meeting Halls land uses are currently prohibited in the RS-4 HD zoning district pursuant to Table 2-2 (Allowed Uses and Permit Requirements for Residential Zoning Districts) of Zoning Code Section 17.22.030 (Residential District Land Uses and Permit Requirements). Therefore, the current use of the property as the Shakespeare Club of Pasadena (philanthropic social club) is classified as legally nonconforming. No changes in use or operation are requested as part of the proposed project.

Development Standards

The project would continue the social club adaptive reuse of the existing 8,580 square-foot, previously single-family residential building. No modifications to the existing building footprint, floor area ratio (FAR), setbacks, or height are proposed. Proposed exterior improvements are limited to the as-built decorative iron driveway entry gates. No changes to the existing surface parking lot would occur.

Pursuant to Zoning Code Section 17.40.180 (Walls and Fences), a wall, fence, or gate within the side and rear yard is limited to a maximum height of six feet. The proposed request is to allow two existing driveway entry gates in the side yards with heights of 8'-2" (north entry gate) and 8'-4" (south entry gate), where a maximum height limit of six feet is allowed. The gates are attached to existing perimeter property walls.

Variance for Historic Resources: To allow two existing driveway entry gates at the north and south side of the building with heights of 8'-2" and 8'-4", where the maximum height permitted by the Zoning Code is six feet.

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 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. Through the Design and Historic Preservation Section, the property was designated as a historic landmark on October 29, 2018, and additionally designated as a Historic Monument on March 15, 2022.

The Hearing Officer may approve a Variance for Historic Resources to provide relief from the maximum height for fences 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 Resources 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 continuation of the adaptive reuse of the designated Historic Monument is allowed for the structure built as a single-family residence. The property is surrounded by a low stucco-coated wall surrounding the front parking lot. The two entry driveways located at the edges (north and south) of the site from South Grand Avenue are marked by the low wall's pilasters with precast caps decorative finials. From the front of the property, the two driveways continue east toward separate parking areas demarcated by additional stucco-coated perimeter walls, setback approximately 60 feet from the front property line and in line with the building frontage. On the south side of the property, the proposed entry driveway gate is placed between existing perimeter walls ranging from 8'-0" to 8'-2". On the north side of the property, the proposed entry driveway gate is located between an existing 7'-6" perimeter wall and 10'-8" nautilus wing wall. The existing perimeter walls frame the entry driveways with various decorative features accenting the building's Italian Renaissance Revival architectural elements. The custom gate designs feature an ornate arrangement of spirals at the top that rise from the simpler picket design at the base to a peak at the center. The arched shape of the gates compliments the shapes of the property's decorative finial details and nautilus wing wall. The gates feature an open metal design where a solid gate could be allowed (for a gate up to six feet in height). The gates are powder coated to match the existing building. Thus, the decorative spiral element, height undulation from the gate posts to the center peak, combined with the transparent design and powder coated finish, allows for a design and scale which complements the architecture of the building and allows for transparency to the rear of the property. Allowing the over height entry gates across the north and south driveways, between existing perimeter walls, is necessary to preserve and compliment the historic stucco-coated wall with precast caps and finials. Requiring the gates to comply with the 6'-0" height maximum would result in an inappropriate height that would offset the Historic Monument's existing walls.

The Hillside Development Overlay District is intended to ensure a safe means of ingress and egress for vehicular (including emergency equipment) and pedestrian traffic to and within the hillside areas, with minimum disturbance to the natural features. The gates feature Knox boxes so that emergency vehicles would have access. The existing gate location is in line with the existing building and is approximately 60 feet back from the front property line. The existing driveway entry gates would maintain the existing street character along South Grand Avenue. The project is not proposing to modify the existing building footprint or increase the existing height which minimizes the potential for adverse effects on the nearby residential uses. It is anticipated that the project would have no noticeable effect on surrounding properties because it would occur in compliance with all applicable building and fire codes. According to the Design and Historic Preservation Section, the environmental setting is not contributing to the designation and the proposed driveway entry gates do not require a Certificate of Appropriateness and are therefore not required to demonstrate compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Granting the Variance for Historic Resources would not impact property within the neighborhood. The project would maintain its existing setbacks and heights which would not affect views, sight lines, bulk, and mass. In addition, there are no proposed changes to the existing parking. The

Shakespeare Club facility has been in operation for over 50 years and the adaptive reuse would continue with the proposed project. It is anticipated that the request to exceed the maximum allowable gate height requirement would have no noticeable effect on surrounding properties and the existing historic resource.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:

The subject site is designated as Low Density Residential in the General Plan Land Use Element within the Hillside Overlay District. The use of the site would remain a Clubs, Lodges, Private Meeting Hall land use. The character of the single-family residential neighborhood would be maintained. Policy 21.3 (Neighborhood Character) of the Land Use Element of the General Plan requires preservation of the character and scale of Pasadena's established residential neighborhoods. The Variance for Historic Resources for two driveway entry gates to exceed the maximum allowed height will not compromise the character of the existing residential neighborhood and will not grant a special privilege. 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 continued adaptive reuse of the site will ensure the preservation of a surviving early example of a particular building type. 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 a designated Historic Monument, which would continue to 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 project would allow the existing resource to be rehabilitated and appropriately modernized to reduce the risk of deterioration that may otherwise occur. Finally, the design of the exterior improvements demonstrate architectural sensitivity to the existing architectural style.

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). 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 construction of accessory structures including driveway entry gates. The proposed project would allow the continuation and adaptive reuse of an existing building, 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 a historical resource that convey its historical significance (i.e., its character-defining features) can be considered to materially impair the resource's significance.

The historic character of the property will be retained and preserved, as the proposed project will not remove any distinctive materials or alter any original exterior features, spaces, or spatial relationships that characterize the building. The driveway entry gates will not have potential to

destroy extant original materials or features. Based on the scope of work, the project as proposed, is not anticipated to cause a substantial adverse change to a historical resource. Thus, 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 Section, and Departments of Fire, Transportation, Public Works, and Water and Power had the opportunity to review the proposal. Based on their review of the project no comments or recommended conditions of approval are proposed.

CONCLUSION:

It is staff's assessment that the findings necessary for approving the Variance for Historic Resources can be made. Except for the proposed gate heights, the project meets all applicable development standards required by the Zoning Code. Granting the request would continue the existing adaptive reuse of the existing designated Historic Monument without adversely impacting property in the neighborhood. The project does not include modifications to the existing building footprint or the addition of new floor area. Therefore, the project meets applicable development standards required by the Zoning Code. 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 of Approval
- Attachment B: Recommended Conditions of Approval

ATTACHMENT A
SPECIFIC FINDINGS FOR VARIANCE FOR HISTORIC RESOURCES #11971

Variance for Historic Resources

1. *The Variance for Historic Resource is necessary to facilitate the appropriate use of an existing designated historic structure.* The continuation of the adaptive reuse of the designated Historic Monument is allowed for the structure historically built as a single-family residence. The property is improved with low stucco-coated walls surrounding the front parking lot. The two entry driveways from South Grand Avenue are marked by the low wall's pilasters with precast caps decorative finials. From the front of the property, the two driveways continue east toward separate parking areas demarcated by additional stucco-coated perimeter walls, setback approximately 60 feet from the front property line and in line with the building frontage. On the south side of the property, the proposed entry driveway gate is placed between existing perimeter walls ranging from 8'-0" to 8'-2". On the north side of the property, the proposed entry driveway gate is located between an existing 7'-6" perimeter wall and 10'-8" nautilus wing wall. The existing perimeter walls frame the entry driveways with various decorative features accenting the building's Italian Renaissance Revival architectural elements. The custom gate designs feature an ornate arrangement of spirals at the top that rise from the simpler picket design at the base to a peak at the center. The arched shape of the gates compliments the shapes of the property's decorative finial details and nautilus wing wall. The gates feature an open metal design where a solid gate could be allowed (for a gate up to six feet in height). The gates are powder coated to match the existing building. Thus, the decorative spiral element, height undulation from the gate posts to the center peak, combined with the transparent design and powder coated finish, allows for a design and scale which complements the architecture of the building and allows for transparency to the rear of the property. Allowing the over height entry gates across the north and south driveways, between existing perimeter walls, is necessary to preserve and compliment the historic stucco-coated wall with precast caps and finials. Requiring the gates to comply with the 6'-0" height maximum will result in an inappropriate height that will offset the Historic Monument's existing walls. Relief from the fence height requirement is necessary to continue the Shakespeare Club that also enables preservation of a designated historic monument.

2. *The Variance for Historic Resource would not adversely impact property within the neighborhood or historic district.* Granting the Variance for Historic Resources will not impact property within the neighborhood. The Hillside Development Overlay District is intended to ensure a safe means of ingress and egress for vehicular (including emergency equipment) and pedestrian traffic to and within the hillside areas, with minimum disturbance to the natural features. The gates feature Knox boxes so that emergency vehicles will have access. The proposed gate location is in line with the existing building and is approximately 60 feet back from the front property line. The proposed driveway entry gates will maintain the existing street character along South Grand Avenue. The proposed project is not proposing to modify the existing building footprint or increase the existing height which minimizes the potential for adverse effects on the nearby residential uses. It is anticipated that the project will have no noticeable effect on surrounding properties because it will occur in compliance with all applicable building and fire codes. According to the Design and Historic Preservation Section, the environmental setting is not contributing to the designation and the proposed driveway entry gates do not require a Certificate of Appropriateness and are therefore not required demonstrate compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

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 subject site is designated as Low Density Residential in the General Plan Land Use Element within the Hillside Overlay District. The use of the site will remain a Clubs, Lodges, Private Meeting Hall land use. The character of the single-family residential neighborhood will be maintained. Policy 21.3 (Neighborhood Character) of the Land Use Element of the General Plan requires preservation of the character and scale of Pasadena's established residential neighborhoods. The Variance for Historic Resources for two driveway entry gates to exceed the maximum allowed height will not compromise the character of the existing residential neighborhood and will grant a special privilege. 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 continued adaptive reuse of the site will ensure the preservation of a surviving early example of a particular building type. 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 a designated Historic Monument, which will continue to 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. Finally, the design of the exterior improvements demonstrate architectural sensitivity to the existing architectural style.

ATTACHMENT B
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL FOR VARIANCE FOR HISTORIC RESOURCES #11971

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

General

1. The site plan and elevations submitted for building permits shall substantially conform to plans stamped "Approved at Hearing, September 6, 2023," except as modified herein.
2. The right granted under this application must be enacted within 24 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 two existing driveway entry gates at the north and south side of the building with heights of 8'-2" and 8'-4".
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 **ZENT2023-00055** 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 Katherine Moran, Current Planning Section, at (626) 744-6740 to schedule an inspection appointment time.