

FINDINGS

(As Adopted by the West Los Angeles Area Planning Commission on May 3, 2017)

The proposed project involves the demolition of a detached one-story garage, for the construction of one new dwelling unit over a new garage located to the rear of an existing three unit apartment home, totaling to four dwelling units. The new garage will replace the existing garage and will be two-stories (one-story dwelling unit over one-story garage) at 27.5 feet, matching the height of the existing apartment home. The new dwelling unit will house three-bedrooms. Six automobile parking spaces and four bicycle parking spaces will be housed within the new garage. Common open space is provided within the front yard and beyond the required yards. The project also includes a minor addition of approximately 55 square feet to the south portion of the existing apartment home which will connect the apartment home to the new structure.

The project request also includes a Project Permit Specific Plan Adjustment to allow a garage height of 9 feet in lieu of the maximum allowable garage height of 7 feet per Section 6.D of the Westwood Community Multi-Family Specific Plan. The subject site is rectangular, approximately 8,694.5 square feet, and zoned [Q]RD1.5-1XL. The project is listed as a non-contributor within the Devon-Ashton Apartment Historic District.

The Devon-Ashton Apartment Historic District is characterized by one- or two-story apartment homes containing between two and eight units each. These homes were designed in the American Colonial Revival, Mid-Century Modern, and Minimal Traditional styles dating from the 1930's to 1940's. The existing apartment home on-site was constructed in 1940 and was designed with an architectural style of Minimal Traditional. As it applies to the site, the existing two-story apartment home will be retained and the project will be limited to the rear (east), not visible from public right-of-way. The new two-story structure will match the architectural style, color, material, and height of the existing apartment home. The project's design, massing, size, and scale are compatible with the existing structure on site and surrounding properties within the District.

1. A recommendation was made by the Westwood Community Design Review Board, pursuant to Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 16.50:

The Design Review Board met on September 21, 2016, and convened a quorum of five Board Members. The vote was unanimous, recommending approval of the project since the project will substantially comply with Section 16.50, Subsection E of the Los Angeles Municipal Code as well as the relevant design guidelines and development provisions of the Specific Plan.

The recommended conditions are:

- a. Windows and doors to be wood to match the existing wood windows and doors.
- b. The proposed French doors are to be wood 2 lite wide x 6 lite high.
- c. The roof on the bay windows shall match the existing standing seam metal.
- d. The wood railings on the balcony to match the proposed photo on Sheet A7.
- e. The balcony edge to have 1 inch x 2 inch molding running horizontally at top of balcony floor fascia.
- f. New gutters and downspout to match existing.
- g. New planting to match existing plant types, including 5-gallon Ligustrum (Privet) and 1 or 5 gallon Agapanthus. Any new lawn installed to replace the existing lawn, shall be marathon two.

The review and recommendation of the Westwood Community DRB was based upon conformance with the criteria in the Westwood Community Design Review Board Specific Plan (Section 6.B), as described below.

- a. The proposed structure conforms to provisions within the Westwood Community Plan and the Westwood Community Multi-Family Specific Plan. This includes conforming to the allowable density per the Low Medium II Residential Land Use designation and the corresponding [Q]RD1.5-1XL Zone. With a total lot area of approximately 8,695 square feet and a permitted density of 1,500 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit, the total density of four dwelling units (three existing, plus one new dwelling unit) is less than the allowable maximum of six units on the subject site. The proposed two-story rear structure and approximately 55 square foot addition to the existing apartment home conforms to applicable land use regulations, design standards and landscape standards of the Specific Plan, as described above, including height, parking, open space, yards, screening of roof-top equipment, landscaping and street trees. Lastly, the proposed structure compatible with the existing three-unit apartment home on-site and is consistent with the architectural style, massing, size, and scale of the surrounding homes within the Devon-Ashton Apartment Historic District.
- b. The proposed structure is designed so as not to cast shadows on one-third or more of any adjacent residential structure as projected on plan view for more than two hours between the hour of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. on December 21. Per the shadow study submitted by the applicant, shadows are generated, but the proposed project does not cast shadows on one-third or more of any adjacent residential buildings for more than two hours.
- c. The proposed project will not result in equipment (such as ventilation, heating, and air conditioning devices) being visible from public view. As depicted in Exhibit A, mechanical and electrical equipment will be enclosed and/or screened from view. The stairwell to the proposed unit will not be visible from the public right-of-way, as it will be housed to the rear.
- d. The proposed building is compatible with the design, massing and architectural integrity of the surrounding buildings. The new two-story structure comprised of one new dwelling unit over a new garage will match the Minimal Traditional architectural style of the existing two-story, three-unit apartment home, as well as match in massing, scale, and building height. The façade is characterized by a simple stucco exterior decorated with Traditional French framed windows and doors, and wood shutters offering a break in the building mass.

The colors and materials will match the existing apartment home reflecting character defining features of Minimal Traditional architectural style. Colors and materials to include: stucco in an off-white finish (“Buttonweed”, Dunn-Edwards DE 3162); gabled roof with dark grey colored asphalt shingles; wooden windows and doors to match the white color; the balcony to match the existing wood railings; and the roof on the bay windows to match the existing standing seam metal. As recommended by the DRB, the French doors will be wood 2 lites wide x 6 lites high and the balcony edge will have 1 inch x 2 inch molding running horizontally at the top of the balcony floor fascia.

The architectural style is Minimal Traditional and is consistent with the surrounding apartment homes in the Devon-Ashton Apartment Historic District. The DRB found the project to be compatible with the architectural style, massing, scale, size, and building height of the existing two-story, three-unit apartment home on-site, and to be in-keeping with the apartment homes in the Historic District. They also found the project – to retain the existing apartment home and limit construction to the rear will maintain architectural integrity to the project site and to the surrounding apartment homes in the Historic District.

- e. The one-story parking garage extends approximately nine feet from grade to the floor elevation of the level immediately above the parking garage, exceeding the seven foot height limit. However, the proposed project includes a Specific Plan Adjustment to allow a garage height of 9 feet in lieu of the maximum allowable garage height of 7 feet (see Findings 3 through 5 below). All parking will be housed by the new garage.
- f. The landscape design is varied as reflected on the detailed Landscape and irrigation plan, included in Exhibit A. Plant material includes trees and shrubs, grass and other ground cover. As recommended by the DRB, any new planting will match existing plant types, including 5-gallon Ligustrum (Privet) and 1 or 5 gallon Agapanthus; and, any new lawn installed to replace the existing lawn, shall be marathion two.
- g. The sizes at maturity of plant materials are identified on the Landscape Plan. All landscaping, including trees, shrubs, and grass is to remain. If landscaping is removed during construction, new planting will match all existing plant types. As recommended by the DRB, any new planting will match existing plant types, including 5-gallon Ligustrum (Privet) and 1 or 5 gallon Agapanthus. Any new lawn installed shall be marathion two.
- h. The proposed project conforms to zoning and land use regulations of the Los Angeles Municipal Code. The proposed project consists of the demolition of an existing detached garage for the construction of a new dwelling unit over a new garage resulting in a four-unit residential building, and an approximately 55 square foot addition to the existing apartment home on-site. The existing use as multi-family residential will remain the same and the height of the proposed new two-story structure will match the height of the existing apartment home of 27.5 feet. Therefore, the subject site with the proposed project, will be in conformance with the Low Medium II Residential Land Use designation and the [Q]RD1.5-1XL Zone. The proposed project also satisfies parking, yard, open space and landscape requirements.

2. Project Permit Compliance

The project substantially complies with the applicable regulations, findings, standards, and provisions of the specific plan.

- a. Section 5.A., Building Height, of the Specific Plan is not applicable because the project site does not abut a R1 or more restrictive zone. The site abuts the R5 Zone to the north (across Ashton Avenue) and R3 to the west (across Beverly Glen Boulevard). Finally to the east and south, the zone is RD1.5. The project consisting

of a two-story structure of one unit over a garage will match the height of the existing residential building on-site at 27.5 feet.

- b. The proposed project substantially complies with Section 5.B., Parking Standards, of the Specific Plan which requires 2.25 parking spaces for units with four or fewer habitable rooms and 3.25 parking spaces for larger units. In addition, of these required spaces, one-quarter space per unit shall be guest parking. As depicted in Exhibit A, the new dwelling unit will have five habitable rooms requiring 3.25 parking spaces. The existing three-unit apartment home are serviced by four existing parking spaces which the new garage will provide. A total of seven parking spaces is required, with one designated for guest parking. The location of the guest space is not identified in Exhibit A. The project will provide six automobile parking spaces housed in the new garage. For the seventh required automobile parking space, the applicant has opted to replace it with four bicycle parking spaces pursuant to Los Angeles City Municipal Code Section 12.21.A4. Therefore, the project will meet the parking provisions of the Specific Plan. Condition 3 and 4 ensures that this provision of the Specific Plan will be met.
- c. The proposed project substantially complies with Section 6.A, Open Space, of the Specific Plan which requires 350 square feet of common open space per unit. Of this required open space, at least fifty percent must be landscaped, one-fourth may be above the ground level, and one-half of front and rear required yards may be applied toward the requirement if these yard areas are landscaped. As depicted in Exhibit A, there will be a total of four dwelling units on-site (three existing and one new dwelling unit), therefore requiring 1,400 square feet of open space. This requirement is met within the front and side yards, and areas beyond the required yards. The front yard is 890 square feet and one-half is landscaped, providing a minimum of 445 square feet of landscaped open space in the front yard. There will be 1,331 square feet of open space beyond the required (north) side yard, of which a minimum of 1,156 square feet of it will be landscaped. Lastly, there will be 131 square feet of open space in-between the existing apartment home and the new two-story structure. Therefore, the project will be providing 1,976 square feet of open space exceeding the minimum requirement. Approximately 90 percent of the open space is and will continue to be landscaped. Condition 5 ensures that the required open space will be provided.
- d. Section 6.B., Walkways, is not applicable because the width of the subject site is not 150 feet or more. As depicted in Exhibit A, the width of the site is approximately 50 feet.
- e. Section 6.C., Building Setbacks, is not applicable because the subject site is not directly across the street and within 200 feet of an R1 or more restrictive zone. Per ZIMAS, parcels across Ashton Avenue (north) are zoned R5; parcels across Beverly Glen Boulevard (west) are zoned R3; and properties to the south and to the west are zoned RD1.5.
- f. The proposed project substantially complies with Section 6.D, Garage, of the Specific Plan which allows only one level of a parking garage above the natural existing grade, up to a maximum of seven feet in height, measured to the floor elevation of the level immediately above the parking garage. As depicted in Exhibit A, the new garage will be one-story, built at-grade, and reach nine feet in height.

However, the applicant is requesting a Project Permit Specific Plan Adjustment to allow for the nine feet in lieu of the maximum allowable garage height of 7 feet (see Findings 3 through 5 below). Condition 6 ensures that the garage will not extend more than nine feet above grade.

- g. The proposed project substantially complies with Section 6.E, Yard Requirements, of the Specific Plan which requires that a minimum of fifty percent of each of the required front, rear and side yards be landscaped. As depicted in Exhibit A, the front yard is 890 square feet in area and one-half of this area is 444.5 square feet. However, 822 square feet of the front yard is currently landscaped and will continue to be maintained. The north side yard consists of 575 square feet of area and approximately 95 percent of it currently is and will continue to be landscaped. The south side yard consists of 217.5 square feet of area and approximately 143 square feet of it is currently landscaped. The rear yard is 325 square feet of area and one-half is 162.5 square feet, which will be grasscrete. In addition to the landscaped required yards, a variety of existing trees, shrubs, and grass decorate large open areas beyond the required yards. Any landscaping that is removed during construction, will be replaced to match the existing. Condition 7 ensures that 50 percent of all yards will be landscaped.
- h. Section 6.F., Buffer, is not applicable as the project site does not immediately abut a R1 or more restrictive zone. Per ZIMAS, across Ashton Avenue (north) are zoned R5; parcels across Beverly Glen Boulevard (west) are zoned R3; and properties to the south and to the west are zoned RD1.5.
- i. The proposed project substantially complies with Section 6.G, Screening, of the Specific Plan which requires that structures on the roof be fully screened from view from adjacent properties, as seen from the grade. As depicted in Exhibit A, no mechanical equipment is proposed for the rooftop. However, an electoral panel will be installed on the south side of the building and will be screened from public view. Condition 8 ensures all mechanical and electrical equipment will be screened.
- j. The proposed project substantially complies with Section 7.A., Landscape Standards General Requirements, of the Specific Plan which requires that a Landscape Plan be prepared by a licensed architect or landscape architect and submitted to the Westwood Community Design Review Board (DRB) for review and approval. In addition, the Landscape Plan is required to illustrate details of the plants and plant material (i.e., names, size at maturity, locations, planting schedule, irrigation plan) and to involve a variety of plant materials. As depicted in Exhibit A, the Landscape Plan has been prepared by a licensed architect, and includes: an irrigation plan; a variety of plant material, including grass and other ground cover, shrubs, and trees; and, clear identification of plant material locations, and size at maturity. The DRB reviewed and recommended approval of the Landscape Plan and Irrigation Plan at its regular meeting on September 21, 2016. This included a recommendation that any new planting will match existing plant types, including 5-gallon Ligustrum (Privet) and 1 or 5 gallon Agapanthus. Any new lawn installed to replace the existing lawn, shall be marathons two for substantial conformance with this plan has been conditioned in Condition 9.
- k. The proposed project substantially complies with Section 7.B., Street Trees, of the Specific Plan which requires that street trees be approved by the Bureau of Street Maintenance/Street Tree Division, planted at a minimum ratio of one for every thirty

linear feet of street frontage abutting the project, and be at least twelve feet in height and three inches in caliper at time of planting. There are two existing street trees fronting Ashton Boulevard and two existing street trees fronting Beverly Glen Boulevard. The total linear frontage of the project site is approximately 191 feet, requiring six street trees. If the Bureau of Street Services determines that more street trees can be accommodated in the parkway, the project shall plant up to six street trees per Bureau's standards and per Specific Plan standards. Condition 9 ensures conformance with all of these standards.

3. Project Permit Specific Plan Adjustment

That there are special circumstances applicable to the project or project site which make the strict application of the specific plan regulation(s) impractical.

The original project involved the demolition of an existing two-story, three-unit apartment home and detached one-story garage; for the construction of a three-story, five-unit singular residential building over one level of subterranean parking. However, during the environmental initial study phase of the environmental review, it was learned that the subject site and surrounding properties were being surveyed for a proposed historic district, referred to as the Devon-Ashton Apartment Historic District (characterized by one- or two-story apartment homes containing between two and eight units each architectural style exemplifying American Colonial Revival, Mid-Century Modern, and Minimal Traditional styles dating from the 1930's to 1940's). Subsequently, after meeting stark opposition from local community members, the applicants redesigned their project to retain the existing apartment home and limit the scope of work to the rear of the site, away from public view. The existing detached one-story garage will be demolished and replaced with a new two-story structure consisting of one new dwelling unit over a new garage, which will match the architectural style, color, material, and height of the existing building. The project, as revised, is now consistent with the surrounding properties in the Historic District.

The existing garage requires replacement, as it was constructed in 1940 and cannot structurally support a second-story. As a result, the new garage will allow for the construction of a new dwelling unit on top. The height of the existing garage, measured from the floor elevation to the level immediately above the parking garage is nine feet. To be consistent with the existing, the new garage will match this height at nine feet, exceeding the seven foot height limit in Section 6D of the Specific Plan.

This provision was intended for new multifamily developments built over subterranean parking, as well as to limit the view of the garage from the public street allowing for more architectural details to decorate the building façade. However, it was not intended for existing properties to be retained.

Furthermore, the Westwood Community Multifamily Specific Plan was established to provide development standards for new multifamily developments to ensure "orderly, attractive and harmonious, multiple-family residential development in the Westwood community which takes into consideration the architectural character and environmental setting of the community." The project meets this objective, as the project will preserve the existing architectural character and environmental setting of the site and surrounding properties in the Historic District. The additional two feet in height is minimal as it will match the height of the existing garage. For all of the above reasons, there are such circumstances

applicable to the project making the strict application of the specific plan height regulation impractical.

4. **That in granting the Project Permit Adjustment, the Director has imposed project requirements and/or decided that the proposed project will substantially comply with all applicable specific plan regulations.**

The project as designed substantially complies with all the applicable provisions within the Westwood Community Multifamily Specific Plan with no deviation requests from the City of Los Angeles Municipal Code. In addition, Conditions 1 through 10 will ensure project compliance with these provisions are met. The additional height permitting a garage height of nine feet, in lieu of the maximum permitted height of seven feet, will allow for a project design that is consistent with the Minimal Traditional architectural style of the existing two-story, three-unit apartment building, and it will match the height of the existing detached one-story garage proposed for demolition. Lastly, the project will be consistent with the proposed Devon-Ashton Apartment Historic District.

5. **That in granting the Project Permit Adjustment, the Director has considered and found no detrimental effects of the adjustment on surrounding properties and public rights-of-way.**

The adjustment permitting a garage height of nine feet in lieu of seven feet will render no detrimental effects on surrounding properties and public rights-of-way. The proposed garage will not be visible from public right-of-way as it will be located to the rear of the site, away from any street frontage. In addition, the total height of the garage, plus the construction of a new dwelling unit above it will be two-stories matching the height of the existing apartment home on-site. More importantly, the height will be consistent with the adjacent properties. The proposed two-story structure will not cast shadows on one-third or more of any adjacent residential structure as projected on a plan view for more than two hours between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. on December 21. In addition, the proposed project complies with all the regulations in the Westwood Community Multifamily Specific Plan and the City of Los Angeles Municipal Code. Lastly, the adjustment request is a direct result of preserving the architectural character, mass, and scale of the existing apartment home on-site and the proposed Historic District. Therefore, granting the adjustment will have no detrimental effects on surrounding properties and public rights-of-way.

4. **Environmental Review**

The project incorporates mitigation measures, monitoring measures when necessary, or alternatives identified in the environmental review, which would mitigate the negative environmental effects of the project, to the extent physically feasible.

In compliance with requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the project was issued a Negative Declaration (ENV-2012-2986-ND), and a Categorical Exemption (ENV-2012-2986-CE), prepared by the Department of City Planning in accordance with the City of Los Angeles CEQA Guidelines. As such, it reflects the independent judgment of Department staff as a designee of the Director of Planning.

The Planning Department received a few comment letters from concerned residents regarding the site's relation to the proposed Devon-Ashton Apartment Historic District.

However, these concerns were based on the old project plans to demolish the entire site and construct a new three-story, five-unit apartment building. The project as revised, involves retaining the existing two-story, three-unit apartment home and demolishing the existing detached garage for the replacement and construction of a new garage and one new dwelling unit on top, and an approximately 55 square foot addition to the existing apartment home. The scope of work is limited to the rear of the site and is not visible from the public right-of-way. A Negative Declaration, ENV-2012-2986-ND was issued on April 6, 2017 in accordance with the revised project description.

No comments were received for Negative Declaration, ENV-2012-2986-ND

On the basis of the whole administrative record, including the Negative Declaration, No. ENV-2012-2986-ND, and all comments received, there is no substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment. The Negative Declaration reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis. The records upon which this decision is based are with the Environmental Review Section of the Planning Department in Room 750, 200 North Spring Street.

A Categorical Exemption, ENV-2012-2986-CE, was also prepared for the proposed project consistent with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act and the City CEQA Guidelines. The project as revised, retains the existing two-story apartment home and development is limited to the rear, away from public right-of-way. The project involves demolition of a detached one-story garage, for the construction of one new dwelling unit over a new garage, resulting in a total of four dwelling units on site. The Categorical Exemption prepared for the proposed project is appropriate pursuant to Article III, Section 1, Class 3, Category 2, and Class 32 (CEQA Guidelines Section 15332), and there is no substantial evidence demonstrating that an exception to a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2 applies.

The Class 3 Category 2 categorical exemption allows for new construction of apartments, duplexes, and similar structures designed for not more than four dwelling units, or not in conjunction with the construction of two or more such structures. The project proposes the demolition of an existing one-story detached garage, for the construction of a detached one-story detached garage with the addition of one dwelling unit above it located to the rear of the site. The existing two-story 3 unit apartment home will be retained, totaling to four units on site. No other structure is proposed.

Therefore, the project is determined to be categorically exempt and does not require mitigation or monitoring measures and no alternatives of the project were evaluated. An appropriate environmental clearance has been granted.