

**M E M O R A N D U M**

**PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
CITY OF SANTA MONICA  
PLANNING DIVISION**

**DATE:** June 11, 2018  
**TO:** The Honorable Landmarks Commission  
**FROM:** Planning Staff  
**SUBJECT:** 401 Ocean Avenue, 18ENT-0142

Consideration of Certificate of Appropriateness 18ENT-0142 for design approval of a 5-unit residential condominium development including a new four-story residential building and the retention, rehabilitation, and restoration of the existing residence known as the Henry Weyse/Charles Morris House, a designated City Landmark.

APPLICANT: Tabit Ventures, LLC  
PROPERTY OWNER: Tabit Ventures, LLC

**INTRODUCTION**

Proposed is the retention, rehabilitation, and restoration of the existing two-story City Landmark residence consisting of two residential units, known as the Henry Weyse/Charles Morris House, and the construction of a new three-unit, four-story residential building with enclosed ground-level parking located at the rear of the parcel. Rehabilitation and restoration of the Landmark residence includes but is not limited to: the removal and in-kind replacement of exterior siding material resulting in a code-defined demolition of the residence, a second floor addition, and repair/restoration of windows and doors.

**BACKGROUND**

Property Description

The subject property is located on the southeast corner of Ocean Avenue and Georgina Avenue. The parcel consists of approximately 22,500 SF in area and is located in the R4 High Density Residential district. The First Court alley borders the subject property on its eastern parcel line and separates the R4 multi-unit district from the adjacent R1 single-unit residential district to the east.

The property is developed with a two-story residence consisting of two residential units, a one-story detached accessory building, trellis, and carport structure. Vehicular access is provided along Georgina Avenue and the rear alley connected by an “L” shape driveway

within the rear half of the parcel. The existing carport was constructed in 1970, and the detached accessory building was constructed in 1993, after the property's historic designation. The property contains mature landscaping including magnolia, coral, and redwood trees with a pergola/trellis structure along the northern street side yard. The residence is setback over 40 feet from the front property line along Ocean Avenue and at least 20 feet from the side property line along Georgina Avenue. Situated on a corner parcel, the considerable open space within the front and street side yards lend to the overall historic setting of the site.

### Landmark Designation

The subject property contains the Henry Weyse/Charles Morris House that was constructed in 1910. The residence was designated a City Landmark on September 13, 1990 as an example of the residential work of notable and renowned architect Robert D. Farquhar that embodies distinguishing Craftsman and Colonial Revival architectural characteristics. The structure was also designated a Landmark based on a finding that it represents the City's social and economic history as one of the earliest homes constructed on a prestigious site in the Palisades Tract after its subdivision in 1905 – and as an example of the type of homes that were built by renowned architects for the City's prominent residents. This development pattern established the Palisades Tract as one of the most elite neighborhoods during early turn-of-the-century Santa Monica.

The character-defining features included in the designation are indicative of the Craftsman style with a mix of American Colonial Revival features consisting of the gabled roof, eave overhangs, shingle cladding, exposed roof rafters, projecting joist ends which support the second floor overhang, brackets under the gable ends, broad chimneys, double hung windows, classical columns, sidelights flanking the front door, and the symmetrical balance of windows on the second story.

On July 6, 2017, the Landmarks Commission supplemented the existing Landmark Designation by designating the property located at 401 Ocean Avenue as a Landmark Parcel in order to preserve, maintain, protect, and safeguard the Landmark building. A copy of the amended Statement of Official Action including the parcel in the designation is provided as Attachment D.

### Landmarks Commission Preliminary Concept Review

The Landmarks Commission held two preliminary concept discussions on the proposed condominium project. These discussions were held by the Landmarks Commission in May 2017 for early preliminary feedback on the proposal and in September 2017 following the formal submittal of the Development Review Permit application. The Landmarks Commission discussed the conceptual plans and provided the following comments:

- Commissioners expressed general support for the rehabilitation project, including the aesthetic, materials, and quality design of the new building and landscaping.

- Commissioners had questions about the massing of the new building and its relationship with the historic building, and suggested softening the building to improve its appropriateness with and sensitivity to the front structure.
- The design of the second floor deck railing on the front building elevation should be similar to the original design.
- Original details and materials on the Landmark building should be preserved, repaired, and restored whenever possible.
- Mature trees should be protected in efforts to maintain the site's overall historic character. Proposed landscaping should not obstruct the public view of the Landmark residence.

In response to the Landmarks Commission's comments, the project would preserve and repair original character-defining features throughout the residence and restore non-original windows with windows more similar to the original as part of a larger restoration of the primary facades. Additionally, the existing non-original second floor deck railing on the building's front elevation would be replaced with a similar design and improved in compliance with safety requirements. In efforts to improve the new building's massing compatibility and relationship with the Landmark building, the following improvements were incorporated:

- street side setback was increased by an additional five feet,
- the ground-level patio was reduced in size with guardrails softened,
- sunscreen (shutters) were reduced in number and appearance at the balconies,
- roofline trellis and fascia were reduced in size, and
- the primary balconies on each floor at the building corner closest to the Landmark residence were also significantly reduced.

#### Planning Commission Approval

On March 7, 2018, the Planning Commission approved Development Review Permit 17ENT-0138 and Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 77180 (17ENT-0305) entitlements authorizing the 5-unit, market-rate residential condominium project. The Planning Commission's findings for approval included that the physical location, size, massing, and placement of the proposed structures on the site are compatible with and relate harmoniously to surrounding sites and the neighborhood. Additionally, the Commission made the finding that the project will not result in any significant historic impacts and is categorically exempt from the provisions of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15331, Class 31 of the State Implementation Guidelines. The rehabilitation and restoration of the historic residence and the proposed construction of a four-story residential building at the rear of the site would be done in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The approved Statement of Official Action which includes the Planning Commission findings for Development Review Permit approval is provided as Attachment E for reference.

As a condition of approval, the Planning Commission recommended that the Landmarks Commission, in their review of the project, pay particular attention to the following during Certificate of Appropriateness review:

- Provide a lighter guardrail at the front deck more appropriate to the historic structure, while addressing current safety requirements.
- Enhance the design of the rear alley building elevation, consistent with the quality of the front and side elevations, in efforts to achieve a more cohesive building design.
- Enhance the pedestrian-orientation and design of the north façade ground floor entry of the new residential building.

In response to the Planning Commission's conditions, the guardrail at the front deck is revised in that the existing vertical railing would remain at the same height as the existing rail with new horizontal metal rails in between extended wood posts added above to achieve the additional height. In efforts to enhance the rear alley building elevation, the window configuration at the alley/street corner of the upper units is modified and window frame color revised to match the copper colored siding material that simplifies the fenestration and improves the relation with the remaining elevations. The pedestrian-orientation and design of the pedestrian entry facing Georgina Avenue is enhanced based on revisions to the entry door type (from double to single glazed door with added side light) and added soffit extending above the recessed entry resulting in a more prominent residential entry. However, staff recommends Condition No. 2 requiring the removal of the horizontal lattice framing the entry that extends above the adjacent patio railing in efforts to maintain clear visibility of the entry.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS**

An historic assessment of the project's consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and for project compliance with CEQA was prepared by the City's historic preservation consultant, Environmental Science Associates (ESA) and provided as Attachment C. As further detailed in the report, the consultant concluded that the project is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards ("Standards"), would not result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of the historic resource, and would therefore qualify for categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Section 15331, Class 31 exemption.

Staff has analyzed the proposed project for consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and as further discussed in this report, also finds that execution of the proposed project scope would be performed in a sensitive manner that is consistent with the Standards. The essential form and integrity of the historic residence and its environment would be unimpaired by the proposed rear additions, associated alterations, and the new four-story building. After project completion, the residence would retain its eligibility as a City Landmark.

The project is thereby categorically exempt from the provisions of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15331, Class 31 of the State Implementation Guidelines in that the rehabilitation and restoration of the historic residence, and the proposed construction of a four-story residential building at the rear of the site will be done in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings (2017), revised by Anne E. Grimmer and would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of the historic residence.

Additionally, the project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures), Section 15303(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines. Projects located in an urbanized environment designed for not more than six dwelling units are, consistent with the Guidelines, exempt from environmental review.

## **PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**

Notice of this hearing was provided as required by Section 9.56.170(c) of the Landmarks Ordinance, with notice sent to all owners and occupants within a 300-foot radius and a newspaper notice published in the Santa Monica Daily Press at least 10 days prior to the hearing (Attachment A).

## **ANALYSIS**

The project consists of the rehabilitation and restoration of the Landmark residence and the new construction of a four-story, 3-unit condominium building. The detached accessory building (1993) and carport structure are not included in the Landmark designation and would be demolished. In its place, a new three-unit residential building would be constructed in the rear yard at least 18 feet behind the Landmark residence. The courtyard area in between the structures would be landscaped and designed as common open space. Preserving the Landmark residence in its current setting, the new proposed building at the rear is designed according to Tier 2 development standards and would provide the applicable community benefits as prescribed in the SMMC Chapter 9.23. Specifically, the proposal exceeds the district's maximum base height (30') and number of stories (3).

### Landmark Residence: Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Addition

The existing two-story residence consists of approximately 6,361 SF including the basement area, and is approximately 30 feet in height. The residence would continue to be separated into upper and lower units, each with access to outdoor garden space. The residence is in fair condition, however some character-defining features have deteriorated significantly due to deferred maintenance. Consistent with the property's Mills Act rehabilitation plan, all new electrical, plumbing, and mechanical systems would be installed along with structural upgrades. The exterior materials including the wood shingle siding and asphalt shingle roof are in disrepair and in need of replacement. The existing wood shingle siding would be replaced in-kind and stained light/medium grey (Stain Penofin Verde Oil, "Fog"). The existing asphalt shingle roofing would be replaced with

cedar wood shingles. Cedar shingles would be consistent with the Craftsman style, and the material will be fire-rated to comply with Building Code requirements. The existing brick base would remain unchanged.

Although the historic residence would be retained and rehabilitated in its current location, the proposed in-kind replacement of all exterior cladding material results in a Zoning Code-defined demolition of the residence. This is based on the proposed removal of more than 25% of street-facing exterior cladding and greater than 50% overall, as defined pursuant to SMMC Section 9.25.030(A)(3). Although considered demolished by definition, the designated historic resource may retain its legal non-conforming status provided that the replacement of the exterior wood cladding conforms with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. As discussed in the consultant's report, the proposed replacement of the exterior cladding is consistent with the Standards, and therefore the residence retains its status as an existing two-unit residence.

All windows would be repaired, replaced in-kind as needed, or restored to the original window design (painted white, Dunn Edwards "Crystal Bell") as part of a larger restoration of the building facades. Similarly, doors would be repaired or replaced as needed. As detailed in the consultant's report, proposed window replacement including new multi-lite, wood sash, and double-hung styles are appropriate with the residence's architectural style. Furthermore, the project proposes to remove inappropriate alterations such as non-original windows and shutters on multiple elevations. Consistent with restoration Standards, restoration is based on original 1910 architectural plans/documentation of the residence. Character-defining features including the original clapboards and cornice borders on the gables, and rafter tails would be repaired and restored. Railings and masonry chimneys would also be replaced with a similar design that is compliant with safety requirements. Rebuilt chimneys would consist of smooth plaster finish to match existing. New wall sconces are proposed on the elevations. Accordingly, the project is consistent with Rehabilitation Standard 2 which states that *the historic character of the property will be retained and preserved*, and Standard 6 which states that *deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced, and where the severity of deterioration requires replacement, the new feature will match the old*.

The proposed conversion of the front porch roof into a front deck with new second-level railings occurs on the front facade that is altered from the original design. The existing non-original railing would be refurbished with a similar design and improved in compliance with safety requirements. The existing wood railing would remain at the same height with new horizontal metal rails added above the vertical railing. The new second-level deck would enhance the residence's historic residential character and would be compatible with the residence's Craftsman-style.

The proposed improvements to the rear elevation include a second floor bedroom/bath addition consisting of approximately 260 SF and a new second level deck that would not be visible from Ocean Avenue. The expansion is designed with a lowered roofline and inset exterior walls that clearly differentiates the addition from the existing residence, while also maintaining the overall roof profile and massing. These minor alterations would

not obscure character-defining features, would reuse clapboard vents taken from the modified gable, and would be consistent with the historic residence. Accordingly, the addition and second level deck is consistent with Standard 9 which states that *new additions or exterior alterations shall not destroy historic materials and shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with historic materials, scale, proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*

The existing landscape has been substantially altered and has low historic integrity. The proposed landscape would retain the extant remaining features, including the open character with a view of the residence from the street, existing mature trees, and the in-kind replacement of the wood trellis (painted reddish brown) located in the side yard. The existing concrete walkways within the front yard will also be maintained and repaired as needed. The proposed front yard landscaping includes materials with a vibrant color palette of shrubs and ground cover. However, staff recommends the removal of the two proposed Magnolia trees in front of the residence (Condition No. 3) which would obstruct the view of the Landmark residence based on its mature growth ranging 20-30 feet in height. Proposed landscaping in the side yards and common areas between the buildings consist of a contemporary planting palette in relationship with the new residential building. The proposed overall landscape design, including new hardscape materials, is appropriate in design and materials based upon landscaping utilized in Craftsman style architecture of the early twentieth-century period. The new landscaping, appropriate with the historic character of the property, will enhance the overall appearance of the site.

As discussed, the proposal is an appropriate rehabilitation and restoration of this significant Landmark structure. In efforts to ensure project conformance with the Standards and to protect the residence's character-defining features, staff recommends Condition No. 1 which requires construction phase monitoring of the project by a qualified architectural historian.

#### New 3-Unit Residential Building

The proposed building at the rear is a modern design. The residential building would be four-stories, 40 feet in height, and consists of 10,963 square feet in area. The ground floor includes the entry foyer, a bonus room for the second floor unit, five garages, and an enclosed refuse room. Each three-bedroom residential unit occupies an entire floor including a sizable outdoor balcony adjacent to primary living area. Primary balconies are designed facing Georgina Avenue providing views of Palisades Park and the ocean. Each floor is accessed by an elevator and secondary stairs on the south and west elevations. The roof area consists of two private open space areas for the third and fourth level units with fiberglass planters, area for solar panels and mechanical equipment, and a single 9'-0" elevator projection above the roofline.

#### Compatibility with Landmark Residence

Consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standard 9, the new contemporary building would be differentiated in style from the historic American Colonial Revival/Craftsman residence. Exterior materials consist of wood shiplap siding (Benjamin Moore "Platinum Grey"), painted copper color metal panel siding, glass railings, aluminum louver panels,

aluminum-frame windows and doors, aluminum-finish sconces at the ground level, and operable aluminum shutters at the balconies. The exterior finishes and similar colors of the new building would be appropriate to and complementary with the Landmark's historic materials and features. The new building is designed in smaller scale components with balconies and shutters that are scaled to be relatively proportionate to the scale, textures and details of the historic residence.



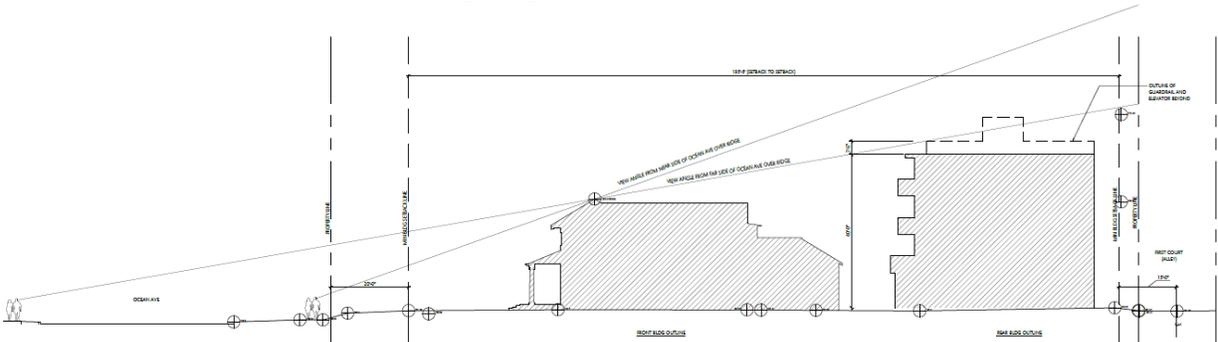
Recessed/Stepped Balconies @ Building Corner

Overall, the new building is setback from and respectful of the historic residence. The building would be setback 20 feet from the street side property line and at least 18 feet behind the Landmark building on all levels. Particularly, the primary balconies on each floor facing Georgina Avenue are angled and setback at the building corner closest to the rear of the historic resource. The building steps back from the Landmark from the ground level to the upper floors, reducing the massing in relation to the Landmark. Further, the inset balcony corners reduce the perceived scale and massing of the new building and soften its appearance in relation to the historic residence. The use of clear-glazed guardrails for the stepped balconies dematerialize the perception of mass through design and materials. Additionally, the ground-level patio includes low semi-permeable fencing that softens the building's ground floor with the common courtyard and is similar in material with the existing side yard trellis.



Georgina Avenue Elevation (for building form context only)

The upper level balconies facing Georgina Avenue are angled and setback to reduce the overall massing of the building in relation to the historic residence and of the structure as viewed from Georgina Avenue. Further, the roof level is designed with minimal projections above the roofline that minimizes the building height, and includes clear glass guardrails that are recessed from the building edge to soften the roofline appearance.



As shown above in the street view section diagram the new building would not be visible from the sidewalk directly in front of the property and would have limited visibility of a portion of the roof projections as viewed directly across the street from Palisades Park. Based on the proposed design and building placement, the building would be compatible in size and massing with the historic residence.

## RECOMMENDATION

As proposed, the scope of work would be performed in a manner that is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The project will rehabilitate and restore the Landmark residence in need of repair to ensure that the property will continue to convey the early residential development pattern in the Palisades Tract area. For these reasons, staff recommends the Commission approve Certificate of Appropriateness 18ENT-0142 based on the finding as required pursuant to SMMC Section 9.56.140(a) and (c) and subject to the conditions outlined below.

## CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FINDING

1. The proposed work will not detrimentally change, destroy or adversely affect any exterior feature of the Landmark or Landmark Parcel upon which such work is to be done in that the proposed rehabilitation and restoration work to the Landmark residence consisting of in-kind replacement of exterior siding and roof material, a second floor addition, and repair/restoration of windows and doors will enhance the historic integrity and character of the Landmark property. All windows will be repaired, replaced in-kind as needed, or restored to the original window design as part of a larger restoration of the building facades. The project proposes to remove inappropriate alterations such as non-original windows and shutters on multiple elevations. Consistent with restoration Standards, restoration is based on original 1910 architectural plans/documentation of the residence. The existing deteriorated wood shingle siding will be replaced in-kind and character-defining features including the original clapboards and cornice borders on the gables, and rafter tails will be repaired and restored. The front balcony railing and masonry chimneys will also be replaced with a similar design that is compliant with Building Code requirements. The proposed improvements to the rear elevation include a second floor addition and a new second level deck that will not be clearly visible from the street. The addition is offset and differentiated from the existing residence and will be consistent with the scale of the historic residence.

The essential form and integrity of the historic residence and its environment will be unimpaired by the proposed rear additions, associated alterations, and the new four-story building. After project completion, the residence will be greatly enhanced and continue to convey its historic significance as a Landmark. As proposed, the scope of work will be performed in a manner that is complementary to the existing property and consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The project will not result in any impacts to the overall integrity of the Landmark building and associated Parcel.

2. The proposed new construction would not adversely affect and not be disharmonious with the Landmark residence situated upon the Landmark Parcel in that the new modern building will be differentiated in style from the historic American Colonial Revival/Craftsman residence. The exterior finishes and similar colors of the new building will be appropriate and complementary with the Landmark's historic materials and features. The new building is designed in smaller scale components with balconies and shutters that are scaled to be relatively proportionate to the scale, textures and details of the historic residence. Overall, the new building is setback from and respectful of the historic residence. The building steps back from the Landmark building from the ground level to the upper floors, reducing the massing in relation to the historic residence. Further, the recessed balconies and use of clear-glazed guardrails dematerialize the perception of mass through design and materials.

## CONDITIONS

1. A qualified architectural historian shall monitor the construction phase of the project to ensure that the proposed scope of work is performed in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The architectural historian shall be available to address any preservation-related issues that may arise during construction, and shall be available for site inspections in efforts to minimize potential damage to the historic materials.
2. The horizontal lattice extending above the adjacent patio railing at the ground-level entry of the new residential building shall be removed from the plans in efforts to maintain clear visibility of the entry from the street.
3. In efforts to preserve the view of the Landmark residence, the two Magnolia Alexandrina trees proposed within the front yard area shall be removed from the landscaping plans.
4. This approval is for the plans dated June 11, 2018, which are on file in the City Planning Division, except as amended by any conditions contained herein. Significant changes to the project design that are within the Commission's purview shall require review and approval by the Landmarks Commission. Minor changes may be approved administratively pursuant to all applicable guidelines and shall be subject to staff's approval and consistent with the findings of fact contained herein.
5. This Certificate of Appropriateness shall be in full force and effect from and after the date of the rendering of the decision by the Commission. Pursuant to Landmarks Ordinance Section 9.56.170(h), this approval shall expire within 18 months if the authorized work is not commenced. Should the applicant be unable to comply with this restriction, an extension may be granted pursuant to Section 9.56.250 for an additional 180 days maximum. The applicant must request such an extension prior to expiration of this permit. After that time, the applicant will be required to return to the Commission for approval. In addition, this Certificate of Appropriateness shall expire if the authorized work is suspended for a 180-day period after being commenced.
6. This decision may be appealed by properly filing with the Director of Planning and Community Development a Notice of Appeal on a form furnished by the Planning and Community Development Department. Such notice shall be filed within a ten (10) day time period commencing from the date of the determination.
7. All required Planning and Building Permit approvals shall be obtained. Project plans shall be subject to complete Code Compliance review when the building plans are submitted for plan check and shall comply with all applicable provisions of Article IX of the Municipal Code and all other pertinent ordinances and General Plan policies of the City of Santa Monica prior to building permit issuance.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. Public Notice
- B. Applicant's Materials/Project Plans
- C. ESA Consultant's Historic Assessment
- D. Landmark Designation 17ENT-0077 (Amended STOA)
- E. Planning Commission Statement of Official Action 17ENT-0138 + 17 ENT-0305