



Agenda Item

Planning Commission

Item #: 4.1

1/15/2024

File #: 23-0818

TO: Chair and Members of the Planning Commission

THRU: Anna Pehoushek, Assistant Community Development Director

FROM: Arlen Beck, Associate Planner

1. SUBJECT

Public Hearing: A request to construct a multi-purpose service building for St. Verena Coptic Orthodox Church located at 491 N. Hewes Street and finding of CEQA Exemption (Conditional Use Permit 3215-23, Major Site Plan Review 1054-21, and Design Review No. 4799-15).

2. SUMMARY

The applicant proposes to construct a 19,273-square-foot multi-purpose service building to include a gymnasium, observation decks, Sunday school classrooms, kitchen, restrooms, storage rooms, and landscape improvements on an existing church property.

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 01-24 entitled:

A Resolution of the Planning Commission approving Conditional Use Permit 3215-23, Major Site Plan No. 1054-21, and Design Review No. 4799-15, for the construction of a new multi-purpose service building, and landscape improvements at an existing church property located at 491 N. Hewes Street.

4. AUTHORIZING GUIDELINES

Orange Municipal Code (OMC) Sections 17.08.020B.2.a., 17.10.030C.1., 17.10.060E.2. and 17.10.080 authorize the Planning Commission to review and take action on all the subject applications. Per Table 17.08.020 Footnote (b), when more than one type of application is filed for a single project, the application requiring the highest level of approval shall dictate the review process for the entire project. Therefore, the Planning Commission is the final approving body of the application package.

5. PROJECT BACKGROUND

<i>Applicant/ Property Owner:</i>	Coptic Orthodox Church - Diocese of Los Angeles and St. Verena
<i>Property Location</i>	491 N. Hewes Street
<i>Existing General Plan Land Use Element Designation</i>	Low Density Residential, 2-6 dwelling units per acre (LDR)
<i>Existing Zoning Classification</i>	Single Family Residential, 7,000 square feet (R-1-7)

<i>Site Size</i>	2.55 acres (111,130 sq. ft.)
<i>Circulation</i>	The site is accessed via Walnut Avenue and Hewes Avenue. The City's Master Plan of Streets and Highways classifies Hewes Avenue as a Secondary Arterial with an 80-foot right-of-way, while this section of Walnut Avenue is classified as a Local Street.
<i>Existing Conditions</i>	The subject site is developed with a 9,530 square foot, two story church building at the south. The church building is composed of stucco, with white painted brick on portions of north and south elevations and possesses gable and mansard-like tile roof forms. A basketball court is located to the east of the church, and the church playground is northeast of the church. A one-story 2,850 square foot preschool building is located to the north (rear) of the property.
<i>Surrounding Land Uses and Zoning</i>	Single family residential uses are located to the north, south, and west of the subject site. A church/worship center is located on the easterly adjacent property.
<i>Previous Applications/Entitlements</i>	CUP No. 209-63: On August 5, 1963, the Planning Commission approved the construction of a new Methodist church. CUP No. 2370-01: On June 4, 2001, the Planning Commission approved the operation of a child care center in conjunction with an existing church. CUP No. 2741-08: On June 1, 2009, the Planning Commission approved a 5,989 square foot expansion to the existing church sanctuary building.

6. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project proposes to replace an existing outdoor basketball court and lawn on the east side of existing sanctuary hall, in order to construct a 19,273 square foot multi-purpose service building. The multi-purpose service building (MPB) will be used by church parishioners and their youth for recreational and religious educational activities. The activities include hosting social and religious activities, functions related to youth groups, fellowship services, church dinners and special events such as Holy Week, Great Lent and other observances. The MPB represents Phase II of the church Master Plan approved in 2009. The proposed location of the building will not result in a loss of existing parking spaces.

The church is proposing to comply with Condition 3 of Resolution No. PC 23-09 associated with the church expansion (Attachment 8), by submitting design for a new two-story MPB at this time, prior to the construction of the previously approved expansion of the existing church assembly building. The sanctuary expansion is still intended to be built at some point in the future and remains a part of the Master Plan, but the proposed MPB will fill a more immediately pressing need of the church.

Section 17.13.030 of the Orange Municipal Code (OMC) designates churches as a conditionally permitted use in the R-1-7 zoning district. The request for a new two-story multi-purpose building expands the scope of the existing church's CUP (CUP 2753-09) and requires that a new CUP be reviewed and approved. Section 17.10.060.E, of the OMC states, "Any proposal exceeding the criteria for minor site plan review shall require major site plan review". This proposal requires Major Site Plan Review because it exceeds the 10,000 square feet and will have an occupancy load greater than 30 persons.

The proposed MPB will contain a gymnasium with observation spaces (on both the first and second floors), seven Sunday School classrooms, a kitchen, toilets, and multiple storage and other support spaces. The ground floor will have an area of 12,165 s.f., and the second floor will have an area of 6,924 s.f. for a total of 19,089 s.f.

Architecture

The rectangular two-story building will have a total height of 28 feet, 8 inches. The building design incorporates a minimal architectural style that seeks to tie into the existing stucco and tile roof sanctuary building and will tie into the future proposed Spanish Colonial style sanctuary expansion design (Phase III), complementing the nearby La Purisma Catholic Church at 11712 Hewes Street. The multi-purpose service building features flat roof lines with clay tile mansard roof sections, and concrete masonry units walls with a color scheme to match the existing and proposed buildings. Windows consist of dark bronze anodized aluminum. The interior of the building will be configured with approximately 12,230 square feet on the first floor, containing a gymnasium space, classrooms, kitchen, offices, equipment room, electrical room, storage rooms, and restroom facilities. The second level is approximately 7,043 square feet, containing an observation deck, bathrooms, an office, storage, classrooms, and observation rooms, and can be accessed via two interior stairways. Detailed information about project design is provided in Attachment 4. Architectural elevations of the proposed building and the proposed sanctuary expansion are provided in the Project Plans (Attachment 7).

Landscaping

New planters, trees, shrubs and green screens are proposed to be installed along the building perimeter. Eight existing trees will be removed as part of the construction for Phase II of this project, however, there are 17 new trees proposed to line the perimeter of the proposed multi-purpose building, and 34 new trees to be planted along the south property line to mitigate the visual impacts of the proposed building on the single-family residences to the south, as conditioned in PC Reso No. 01-24 (Attachment 1). Four new street trees are proposed to be installed with two new street trees to be installed in existing vacant tree wells on Hewes Street sidewalk and two new street trees to be installed at the driveway entrance off N. Hewes Street. New stamped and brush concrete walkways and steps provide pedestrian access to the new building. The existing driveways and gates located along the west and north property lines will remain and not be affected.

Development Standards

	Required	Proposed	Code Section
<i>Building Height</i>	32 feet	28 feet, 8 inches	17.14.070
<i>Distance between structures</i>	N/A	N/A	17.14.120

<i>Fence height</i>	42 inches in front yard setback (first 10') 6 feet in all other areas	Existing six-foot wrought iron fencing with CMU pilasters outside front setback and 6-foot CMU block wall at east and south property.	17.12.070
<i>Floor Area Ratio (FAR)</i>	0.40 FAR	0.25 FAR	17.14.070
<i>Landscaping (non-residential)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front - 10 feet • Interior side and rear yards - 4 feet or, when adjacent to perpendicular parking, 6 feet • Parking area screening from a public street with 5-gallon shrubs, 3 feet on center. • Trash Enclosures require a 4 foot wide landscaped planter on at least 2 sides. Guidelines: • 25 percent of required trees need to be 24-inch box and 75 percent need to be in 15 gallon containers. • 102 trees • Shrubs shall be 5-gallon except for groundcover. • Shrubs are <i>encouraged</i> at the foundation lines of all building elevations seen from the street in 4-foot minimum width planters. Shrubs shall be spaced at 3 feet on center. Street trees required as determined by Public Works. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12-20 feet • 4 feet east side • 4 feet south side • Parking area screened per requirements • Trash enclosure screened on two sides by existing planters. • All trees are 24-inch box • 51 trees proposed for phase II construction, additional trees in phase III of project. • Shrubs are 5 gallon plus groundcover provided. • Shrubs provided at the new planter in parking lot at 4-foot or greater in width. • 9 existing street trees. 4 new street trees proposed. 	Landscape Standards and Specifications 17.14.210
<i>Lot frontage</i>	60 feet	228 feet	17.14.070
<i>Lot depth</i>	100 feet	352 feet	17.14.070

<i>Parking (non-residential)</i>	1 space per 3 fixed seats. (178 spaces required)	134 spaces provided	Table 17.34.060.B
<i>Setback, Front</i>	20 feet	204 feet	17.14.070
<i>Setback, Rear</i>	20 feet	70 feet	17.14.070
<i>Setback, Side</i>	10 feet	100 feet	17.14.070
<i>Setback, Side</i>	5 feet	66 feet	17.14.070

7. ANALYSIS AND STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES

Issue 1: Parking

The existing parking on site is adequate to accommodate the new multi-purpose building in that the scheduling of the various church activities are staggered such that parking will be contained on-site and will not spill over to the surrounding residential neighborhoods. The sanctuary generates the highest demand for parking spaces, requiring 100 spaces. The parking lot accommodates 134 parking spaces. If all of the church activities (classrooms, liturgy, choir practice, etc.) were to occur simultaneously, the OMC would require that 178 parking spaces be provided. However, the schedule of activities shows that no other activities would occur at the same time as any liturgy/mass. The deficiency of 44 parking spaces will not negatively impact the surrounding community, as conditions have been imposed in the Resolution that limit when the liturgy, tutoring, bible study, fellowship, church activities can occur (Attachment 9).

8. PUBLIC NOTICE

On January 4, 2024, the City sent a Public Hearing Notice to 108 property owners and occupants within a 400-foot radius of the project site and persons specifically requesting notice. The project site has been posted in one location with the notification on that same date.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Categorical Exemption: The proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per State CEQA Guidelines 15332 (Class 32: In-Fill Development Projects) because the project is consistent with the City's General Plan and zoning regulations, is located on a site that is less than 5 acres, is not located in an area that is environmentally sensitive, will not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality or water quality, and the site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services. There is no environmental public review or notice required for a categorical exemption.

10. ADVISORY BOARD ACTION

Staff Review Committee:

The City's inter-departmental staff review committee (SRC) conducted a review of the project on June 23, 2021, October 6, 2021 and on March 2, 2022 and recommended project approval to the DRC with conditions.

Design Review Committee:

The Design Review Committee (DRC) reviewed the subject proposal on August 17, 2022 and commented on project phasing, and deficiencies with the site plan and elevations. The project was then continued to the September 21, 2022 meeting, and again to November 2, 2022 at the

applicant's request. At the November 2, 2022, meeting the DRC discussed architectural details, landscaping, and privacy concerns, the project was then continued to the December 15, 2023. The item was continued again at the applicant's request to the April 19, 2023, and again to a date uncertain to allow time for project refinement. At the October 4, 2023 meeting the DRC recommended approval to the Planning Commission with conditions.

11. ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1. PC Resolution No. 01-24
- Attachment 2. Vicinity Map
- Attachment 3. Project Description Letter
- Attachment 4. August 17, 2022, November 2, 2022, and October 4, 2023 Design Review Committee Staff Reports
- Attachment 5. August 17, 2022, November 2, 2022, and October 4, 2023 Design Review Committee meeting minutes
- Attachment 6. Project Site Photographs
- Attachment 7. Project Plans (date stamped 12/11/23)
- Attachment 8. PC Resolution No. 23-09 (approved June 1, 2009)
- Attachment 9. Church Activity Schedule