

April 15, 2021

City of Orange, Community Development Department
300 E. Chapman Avenue
Orange, CA 92866

RE: Letter of Explanation/Justification for Hilbert Museum of California Art Renovations

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of our client, Chapman University, we are pleased to provide you with this request to initiate the Minor Site Plan Review and Design Review for the Hilbert Museum of California Art (HMCA) Renovations project, located at 167 N. Atchison Street in Orange, California. The project site contains the existing HMCA building (167 N. Atchison Street; APN 039-171-11), adjacent Judith A. Partridge Dance Center building (190 N. Cypress Street; APN 039-171-09), and a parking lot. Chapman University is the property owner and applicant for this project, and KTGy is serving as the applicant's representative.

The project site is located within the Academic 2 planning area of the Chapman University Specific Plan (CUSP). As such, the project is subject to the regulations and standards of the CUSP. The project site is also situated within the boundaries of the National Register of Historic Places' Old Towne Orange Historic District and the City's local Old Towne Orange Historic District; therefore, it is subject to the Historic Preservation Design Standards for Old Towne. Both the existing HMCA and Partridge Dance Center buildings are non-contributing structures.

The project is also within the Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan (SFDSP) boundary. Although the SFDSP sets forth policies for the site, it acknowledges that development will be governed by the regulations and standards of the Chapman University Specific Plan. The project is consistent with the Urban Design Framework established in the SFDSP.

Implementation of the project will require approvals of Minor Site Plan Review, Design Review, and Lot Line Adjustment requests. The project is covered under the certified Chapman University Environmental Impact Report (EIR). As such, no additional environmental documentation is required.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The HMCA project site is bounded by N. Cypress Street to the east, N. Maple Avenue to the north, and N. Atchison Street to the west. The existing zoning designation is Public Institution (Specific Plan), within the CUSP area. The project site is surrounded by a mix of academic, industrial, residential, commercial, and transit uses.

The existing HMCA building was originally designed as a temporary location to house the Hilbert Collection of California Art. The HMCA Renovations project proposes to renovate the existing HMCA building (herein referred to as the “South Building”) and adjacent Partridge Dance Center building (herein referred to as the “North Building”), as well as construct a new courtyard between the two buildings, to become the permanent location for the HMCA. The Partridge Dance Center currently occupying the North Building will be relocated to the VPO Packing House approximately two blocks to the north.

The HMCA Renovations project will provide an intimate and accessible venue for the public to view the more than 3,000 pieces of art in the Hilbert Collection of California Art. The project proposes renovations to increase the existing museum space and create an inviting and intuitive-to-navigate interior, allowing the HMCA to exhibit more of its permanent collection. The renovated museum will include gallery space, offices, meeting rooms, a café, a library, foyers, restrooms, storage, and support facilities. An open-air courtyard adjoining the two buildings will be accessible to the public and provide entry points into the HMCA. Exterior renovations are sensitively designed to provide visual and physical connections while addressing compatibility with the scale, character, and context of the surrounding areas.

Located across the street from the Orange Transportation Center, the proposed project has the potential to play an important role in the development of an arts/cultural district in Old Towne Orange, creating a community amenity that will provide a pedestrian connection between the Orange Transportation Center and Old Towne Orange. The project will also fortify the HMCA’s ties to the academic and intellectual life of Chapman University, enhancing its role as an entry to the western section the campus where the Dodge College of Film and Media/Marion Knott Studios, Digital Media Arts Center, Partridge Dance Center, and other University facilities are located.

As described below, the HMCA Renovations project will create an environment that is beneficial to both the community and Chapman University by locating the museum venue and the courtyard where they can be easily accessed by the public, and transforming the streetscape on N. Atchison Street to provide an interesting interface between the Orange Transportation Center, Old Towne Orange, and Chapman

University. The proposed project is consistent with the goals and provisions of the Chapman University Specific Plan and will contribute to the realization of the City's vision for the historic Santa Fe Depot area.

The HMCA Renovations project will convert approximately 4,300 square feet of the existing parking area between the North and South Buildings into an open-air courtyard, as well as transform the streetscape to strengthen the HMCA's presence in its urban context, particularly along the western façades and forecourt facing N. Atchison Street. The project will incorporate, as an exterior frontispiece and public art element, a large restored mosaic entitled *Pleasures Along the Beach* by the noted Californian artist Millard Sheets. This iconic mosaic, composed of Murano glass and ceramic tiles and measuring 40 feet by 16 feet, was a historic landmark on a former Home Savings and Loan building located at the corner of 26th Street and Wilshire Boulevard in Santa Monica for nearly 50 years. It was removed and donated to the HMCA in 2019. As an important art piece that celebrates Southern California's heritage and influence on mid-20th century art, the Millard Sheets mosaic on the west façade of the proposed courtyard structure will greet visitors arriving into the City from the Orange Transportation Center, as well as train riders who are passing through. Additionally, the project will install two sculptures outside the buildings, including *Nuclear Family* by Richard Ellis and *Child on Dolphin* by John Edward Svenson. These art pieces are in the HMCA Collection and currently in storage nearby. The project will create a new environment where special art pieces can be viewed up close in person by the public. Four open-air urban markers and the open-air courtyard structure will serve as a visual invitation to the public to come and explore the museum. Each urban marker and structure has a specific function, but all will incorporate unifying materials.

The existing parking area between the North and South Buildings will be converted into a new courtyard that will serve as a gateway connecting the Orange Transportation Center to Old Towne Orange. The courtyard will provide a centralized, well-defined outdoor space for visitors to relax and socialize. Open to community, the courtyard is designed with flexibility in space programming to allow for casual gathering and dining, occasional lectures, fund-raising events, and special functions. It is anticipated that these temporary events would occur regularly, and the courtyard has the capacity to accommodate up to 144 people. Amenities including, but not limited to, a large specimen tree, planting areas with integrated seat walls, seating elements, and special paving will be incorporated to promote an intimate setting and encourage leisure activities.

The existing parking area north of the current South Building entry will be converted into the new forecourt area, which will include paving and a sculptural planter with integrated seat walls. The existing parking area south of the current South Building entry will remain unaltered, aside from plant material replacements

within the existing planting areas. Two new parking spaces will be added where the existing path between the sidewalk and current building entry is located. In total, the modified parking lot will include 9 parking spaces, consisting of 7 regular spaces, 1 van ADA space, and 1 standard ADA space. The existing bicycle parking area will remain.

In adapting the buildings for their new use, the project proposes to adjust the museum entrances and exterior façades such that the entrances to the North and South Buildings will both face the new courtyard. The proposed building façade renovations are summarized below:

- North Building: The existing ficus and canopies, as well as the window opening on the south façade, will be removed. New storefronts with doors will be installed on the south façade to create new entries to the museum and multi-purpose room. A new storefront will be provided on the north façade facing W. Maple Avenue. Open-air stucco structures and tile wainscots will be installed at locations indicated on the project plans. The building palette will draw from that of Kennedy Hall and the VPO Packing House.
- South Building: The existing brick veneer, metal panels and awnings, as well as the southern storefront and signage on N. Atchison Street, will be removed. New storefronts with doors will be installed on the north façade to create entries to the museum and cafe. New tile wainscots, infill stucco walls, and open-air stucco structures will be installed at locations indicated on the project plans. The building palette will draw from that of Kennedy Hall and the VPO Packing House.
- Courtyard's West Elevation on N. Atchison Street: Millard Sheets' *Pleasures Along the Beach* mosaic on an open-air stucco structure will span between the North and South Buildings at the entry into the courtyard. Tile wainscots will be installed on the support columns of the stucco structure.
- Courtyard's East Elevation on N. Cypress Street: An "art wall" that is painted white for anticipated future mural or art installation will be located on the open-air stucco structure, spanning between the North and South Buildings at the entry into the courtyard. Tile wainscots will be installed on the support columns of the stucco structure.

The HMCA Renovations project is estimated to initiate construction in Summer 2022 and be open to public in mid-2023.

Implementation of the HMCA Renovations project requires the approvals of Minor Site Plan Review, Design Review, and Lot Line Adjustment. Plans for the proposed project will be reviewed by the City of Orange Streamlined, Multi-disciplined, Accelerated Review Team {SMART} and Design Review Committee (DRC) for conformance with the Chapman University Specific Plan (CUSP) Amendment #6. The final determination will be made by the Community Development Director. Below is a summary of project conformance with the CUSP.

Land Use / Zoning

The project site is designated Public Facilities Institutions Max 2.0 FAR (PFI) on the City of Orange General Plan's Land Use Map and zoned as Public Institution - Specific Plan (PI-SP). The project site is located in the Academic 2 (A-2) Planning Area within the Atchison Street Overlay of the CUSP area, which allows for a broad range of University uses that include, but are not limited to, academic and administration facilities, film production facilities and associated uses, cultural facilities, ancillary retail/entertainment uses, parking, food services, and residential uses.

The proposed museum, office, food and beverage services, storage, parking, and other support uses on the project site are consistent with the uses permitted in the A-2 Planning Area of the CUSP. It should be noted that the Specific Plan Amendment #7 currently being processed through the City proposes to remove the Atchison Street Overlay and incorporate appropriate uses allowed by the Overlay into the uses permitted in the A-2 Planning Area. The proposed project will remain consistent with the CUSP regardless of whether the Atchison Street Overlay is removed or not.

The CUSP provides that the campus Floor Area Ratio (F.A.R.) shall not exceed 1.0, excluding parking structures. An F.A.R. transfer of up to an additional 25% on a site is permitted subject to the review and approval of the Community Development Director, so long as the F.A.R. of 1.0 on the overall campus is not exceeded. The F.A.R. of the HMCA Renovations project is 0.54. The project will not alter the existing campus F.A.R. of 0.61, as no change to the existing building square footage is being proposed.

The Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan (SFDSP) includes the HMCA project site within its boundary, as the subject parcels are in the core of the Depot area and offer redevelopment opportunities if consolidated. Although the SFDSP sets forth policies for these parcels, it acknowledges that site development will be governed by the regulations and standards of the CUSP. The SFDSP Urban Design Framework identified a potential future pedestrian plaza space on N. Cypress Street between W. Maple Street and Chapman Avenue. The need for this pedestrian plaza will be fulfilled by the proposed project's new exterior courtyard. As a whole, the

project's proposed uses, courtyard, and streetscape enhancement along N. Atchison Street and N. Cypress Street meet the intent of the SFDSP and implement the City's long-term vision for the Depot area.

Setbacks and Building Heights

The CUSP setback and building height requirements applicable to the proposed project are as follows:

- N. Atchison Street: 15 feet min. setback / 32 feet max. building height
- N. Cypress Street: 10 feet min. setback / 32 feet max. building height
- W. Maple Avenue: 10 feet min. setback / 32 feet max. building height
- Adjacent Side Yard: 0 foot min. setback / 32 feet max. building height

The project complies with the CUSP setback criteria. The façades of both buildings will remain in their current locations, with no change to the existing setbacks along N. Cypress Street, W. Maple Avenue, and the side yard to the south. Along N. Atchison Street, the proposed open-air urban markers/light wells, courtyard structure, and façade additions are set back a minimum of 15 feet from the property line. The open-air urban marker/light well at the northwest corner of the North Building is set back 10 feet from the property line along N. Maple Avenue. Along N. Cypress Street, the proposed courtyard structure is set back a minimum of 10 feet from the property line. The urban markers at the northeast corner of the North Building and on the east side of the South Building are vertical extension of the existing building walls, intended to allow for signage and/or future art or mural installations.

The North and South Buildings are both single-story buildings, with a parapet height of approximately 18 feet and 20 feet, respectively. The height at the proposed open-air structures is 30.5 feet, which is below the maximum building height of 32 feet permitted by the CUSP. Therefore, the project complies with the CUSP building height requirement.

Landscaping and Streetscape

The CUSP requirement for on-site landscaping is a minimum of 20 percent of the total area within 50 feet of the perimeter of each building. Within 50 feet of the North Building's perimeter, 8,160 square feet/43.5 percent of the 18,719 square-foot site area will be landscaped (including planting and hardscape areas). Within 50 feet of the South Building's perimeter, 9,196 square feet/38.5 percent of the 23,820 square-foot site area will be landscaped (including planting and hardscape areas; excluding the parking lot). Therefore, the project complies with the CUSP's on-site landscaping requirement.

The CUSP requires that parking lots provide a minimum of 10 percent landscaping. For purposes of landscaping calculations, the parking lot consists of the setback area along N. Atchison Street from the north wall of the light well to the southern project boundary, including paved parking areas and drives, planting areas, and walkways and excluding the open light well and mechanical yard areas. Approximately 1,774 square feet of landscaping is provided within the approximately 6,127 square-foot parking lot, which equates to 29% of the parking lot. Therefore, the project complies with the CUSP's parking lot landscaping requirement.

Existing street trees adjacent to the site perimeter include Camphor Trees on N. Cypress Street and N. Atchison Street, and Queen Palms on W. Maple Avenue. These trees are consistent with the landscape palette established in the Chapman University Master Landscape Plan and the City of Orange street tree guidelines.

Circulation and Parking

Access to the project site is available from N. Atchison Street, N. Cypress Street, and W. Maple Avenue. Main pedestrian access points into and out of the North and South Buildings are located in the new courtyard. The courtyard is accessible by pedestrians from both N. Atchison Street and N. Cypress Street. The parking lot entry/exit drives are located on N. Atchison Street. The existing curb cut on N. Cypress Street will remain to allow for loading/unloading, and the adjacent street curbs (40' minimum in length) will be marked as a loading zone for temporary parking of catering vehicles.

The existing parking lot provides a total of 19 parking spaces, including 17 regular spaces and 2 ADA spaces, as well as a bicycle parking area. The renovated parking lot in front of the South Building, with ingress/egress on N. Atchison Street, will have a total of 9 parking spaces, including 7 regular spaces, 1 van ADA space, and 1 standard ADA spaces. The existing bicycle parking area will remain. Project implementation would result in a loss of 10 parking spaces from the number of existing parking spaces on-site.

While the use for the South Building will remain as museum and ancillary uses, the use for the North Building will change from dance/academic uses to museum and related uses. The existing North Building includes dance studios and a lecture hall that accommodates up to 100 seats. These uses will be relocated to the VPO Packing House. The new use of the North Building will be museum and ancillary uses, which is required to provide 4 spaces per 1,000 square feet. At 10,000 square feet, the North Building will be required to provide 40 parking spaces.

The 2019-2020 Chapman University Parking Management Plan (PMP) identified a surplus of 294 academic parking spaces. Based on the above calculations, implementation of the proposed project will require additional 50 parking spaces (10 parking spaces removed from the existing parking lot + 40 additional parking spaces required for the North Building), adjusting the academic parking surplus to 242 parking spaces.

Off-street parking for the HMCA will be accommodated in the 9 parking spaces on-site, with overflow parking to be accommodated in the nearby Chapman University West Campus Parking Structure, Marion Knott Studios Parking Lot, or other University parking facilities. It is anticipated that parking would not be adversely impacted, as the peak hours for museum uses are generally different than the peak hours for academic uses. Additionally, public parking is also available along N. Cypress Street and in the nearby Old Towne West Metrolink Parking Structure.

In summary, the HMCA project is consistent with the CUSP design guidance, the SFDSP urban design framework, and the City's Historic Preservation Design Standards. The use, character, scale, and setbacks of the buildings fit well with the surrounding areas and maintain the visual character of the Old Towne Orange Historic District as a whole.

For additional information about the HMCA Renovations project, please refer to the 11" x 17" project booklet that accompanied this letter. If you have any questions, please contact me at the phone number or email address below. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,



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