



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: June 16, 2016 REPORT NO. HRB-16-038

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of June 23, 2016

SUBJECT: **ITEM #11 – General Development Plan Update and Amendment to the Balboa Park Master Plan and Central Mesa Precise Plan for the House of Pacific Relations Expansion**

APPLICANT: City of San Diego

LOCATION: Balboa Park, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Review and consider the proposed update to the General Development Plan (GDP), the proposed amendments to the Balboa Park Master Plan (BPMP) and Central Mesa Precise Plan (CMPP), and the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) related to Cultural/Historical Resources to allow the expansion of the House of Pacific Relations through the construction of 5 new cottage buildings to house 9 member nations; and provide a recommendation to the City Council on the adoption of the proposed GDP update, BPMP and CMPP amendments, and final MND.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Recommend to the City Council adoption of the proposed update to the General Development Plan (GDP), the proposed amendments to the Balboa Park Master Plan (BPMP) and Central Mesa Precise Plan (CMPP), and the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) related to Cultural/Historical Resources to allow the expansion of the House of Pacific Relations through the construction of 5 new cottage buildings to house 9 member nations.

BACKGROUND

This item is a proposed update to the GDP (Attachment 1) and amendment to the BPMP (Attachment 2) and CMPP (Attachment 3) to allow the expansion of the House of Pacific Relations' International Cottages. A MND had been prepared to address and mitigate any environmental impacts resulting from the project (Attachment 4). The action requires approval by the City Council, with a recommendation from the Historical Resources Board (HRB) and other advisory bodies. The HRB has adopted the following procedure for making recommendations to decision-makers (Historical Resources Board Procedures, Section II.B):

When the Historical Resources Board is taking action on a recommendation to a decision-maker, the Board shall make a recommendation on only those aspects of the matter that relate to the historical aspects of the project. The Board's recommendation action(s) shall relate to the cultural resources section, recommendations, findings and mitigation measures of the final environmental document, the Site Development Permit findings for historical purposes, and/or the project's compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties.

The House of Pacific Relations was established in 1935 and represents 32 countries for the purpose of promoting multicultural, goodwill and understanding through educational and cultural programs. The original grouping of cottages included 16 cottages circled around a common landscaped courtyard. The Hall of Nations building to the immediate east/northeast was originally constructed in 1915 as the Kansas State Building. In the 1990s, an amendment to the BPMP and CMPP was approved to allow the House of Pacific Relations to construct an additional 4,000 square feet of space. This resulted in the construction of 5 new cottages, each housing 1 member nation, located to the immediate southwest of the Hall of Nations building. No additional square footage can be built under the current BPMP and CMPP, necessitating the proposed amendments.

This proposed project will construct 4 new duplex cottages and 1 single cottage for the member nations of Mexico, India, Lebanon, Turkey, Palestine, Peru, Panama, Columbia and the Philippines. The House of Pacific Relations complex is located within the federally designated National Historic Landmark District (District). The new cottages will be located just north and south of the existing International Cottages. The 4 duplexes would be approximately 1,200 square feet, and the single-cottage structure would be approximately 600 square feet. Each structure would include a basement (for storage), a residential-style kitchen and lavatory facilities as well as a shared restroom. The total square footage of the proposed cottages is approximately 5,365 square feet. The north and south portions of the project area would each have a common shared courtyard and would include additional walkways and associated new landscaping.

Three duplex cottages would be added just south of the main cottage complex where the House of the United States and House of Ukraine are located in a space that is currently covered with mulch and some turf. The 5 buildings would form a central courtyard that would be primarily accessible by the three new cottages. The new cottages would be connected to the existing complex by a passageway between the House of the United States and House of Ukraine. A second access walkway would be added to the west of the House of Ukraine. Accessible parking is available in the Palisades parking lot and would be accessed by a new walkway between the northwest corner of the parking lot and the Balboa Park Club. In addition, Pan American Place would be resurfaced with enhanced paving and available for pedestrians and service/emergency vehicles only.

One duplex cottage and one single cottage would be added just north of the Hall of Nations Building and House of Iran in an area currently covered in turf. A central courtyard at each location and additional walkways to the new cottages would be included. The 2 new cottages and 2 existing buildings would form a central gathering space with internal access to each building. Due to the elevation of the Hall of Nations building the central courtyard would include stairs, a ramp, low accent wall and planters to take up grade. The existing pavement would be replaced, and an additional walkway would be added to provide access to Pan American Road East. The Organ Pavilion parking lot and the path of travel from the parking lot to the new cottages would be accessible.

ANALYSIS

Implementation of the project requires an update to the GDP and amendments to the BPMP and CMPP to include the proposed expansion, as well as a MND to address and mitigate for potential impacts to archaeological and tribal resources. As detailed below, the project has been determined consistent with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and therefore does not require mitigation related to built-environment historic resources.

The project has been reviewed by historic resources staff and the Board's Design Assistance Subcommittee (DAS) for consistency with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The project was first reviewed by the DAS in January 2012, at which time the new cottages were proposed at a different location between the original historic cottages and the parking area. The DAS found this location, which obscured visibility of the historic cottages, inconsistent with the Standards. In addition, there were operational issues with this location from the perspective of the Park & Recreation Department (Park & Rec).

The project eventually returned to the DAS in May 2015 with a new location and development concept, which is reflected in the proposed amendments. Rather than a single grouping of new cottages, the new buildings were added to the northwest and southeast of the existing House of Pacific Relations complex, allowing them to occupy smaller, less prominent areas. The DAS was largely supportive of the placement and of the concept of duplex cottages, which reduces the total amount of square footage needed by sharing restroom spaces. The DAS did have comments regarding articulation, features, materials and finishes – all of which were focused on ensuring that the cottages were compatible with the historic character of the original cottages, but sufficiently differentiated in their detailing. The item returned to the DAS in July 2015 with refinements to the design to address the comments of the subcommittee. Upon review of the refined project, the DAS advised staff that the project was consistent with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Staff concurs, as follows:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

The Balboa Park National Historic Landmark District (BPNHLD) was originally constructed as Exposition Grounds featuring a wide array of educational, interpretive, promotional, and recreational exhibits. The International Cottages, constructed for the 1935 Exposition, featured educational and cultural programs from countries all over the world. The new cottages which will house 9 member nations of the House of Pacific Relations will continue the educational, interpretive, promotional and recreational activities that have historically characterized the BPNHLD. In addition, the location of the proposed new cottages will not require any significant change to defining characteristics of the district's environment. The locations of the proposed cottages were not important open spaces historically – such as courtyards, plazas or gardens – and did historically feature buildings in the general vicinity which are no longer extant.

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

No historic buildings will be directly impacted by the proposed project. In addition, the location of the proposed new cottages will not require any significant change to defining

characteristics of the district's environment. The locations of the proposed cottages were not important open spaces historically – such as courtyards, plazas or gardens – and did not historically feature buildings in the general vicinity which are no longer extant.

3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

The new cottages will respect the general scale, massing and materials of the original cottages, but will be differentiated to distinguish them as new and avoid a false sense of historical development. Examples of differentiation include simplified shutters and grilles; variegated roof tiles; and a duplex configuration.

4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

The periods of significance for the BPNHLD are 1915-1916 and 1935-1936. The empty landscape spaces which the proposed cottages will occupy were not significant open spaces and have not achieved historic significance in their own right.

5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.

N/A

6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

N/A

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

N/A

8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

The project does propose to include below-grade basement spaces at each of the cottages. This is intended to accommodate needed storage space for the member nations, while at the same time limiting the size and bulk of the new cottages to an absolute minimum. To address the potential for impacts to archaeological resources, the MND includes mitigation measures related to archaeology that include archaeological and Native American monitoring, data recovery, curation and discovery of human remains. Adherence to the required Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) will ensure compliance with Standard 8.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old

and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

The 5 new structures will be completely free standing and located within non-significant open space areas. The duplex cottages all measure less than 1,200 square feet in size, and have been articulated to generally appear as two separate cottages that share a common central restroom space. The stucco will be consistent with the historic 1935 cottages, while other detailing will be differentiated – including the variegated roofing, simplified wrought iron detailing and shutters and fenestration. The cottages will therefore be compatible in scale and character, yet differentiated to the trained eye as non-historic construction.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The 5 new structures will be completely free-standing and will not impact any other structures or contributing resources. The structures could be demolished and removed and the current appearance of the district would be restored. (However, it should be noted that the current appearance does not reflect the historic appearance, due to prior removal of temporary structures and subsequent park improvements.)

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the proposed expansion of the House of Pacific Relations through the construction of 5 new cottage buildings to house 9 member nations on the outskirts of the existing complex of historic cottages was reviewed by historic resources staff and the DAS of HRB, and has been determined to be consistent with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The proposed update to the GDP and amendments to the BPMP and CMPP will allow for the expansion as reviewed and approved by staff and DAS, and the MND includes specific mitigation measures to reduce impacts to cultural and historic resources to below a level of significance. Therefore, staff recommends that the HRB recommend to the City Council adoption of the proposed update to the General Development Plan (GDP), the proposed amendments to the Balboa Park Master Plan (BPMP) and Central Mesa Precise Plan (CMPP), and the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) related to Cultural/Historical Resources to allow the expansion of the House of Pacific Relations through the construction of 5 new cottage buildings to house 9 member nations.



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Attachments:

1. General Development Plan Update Exhibits (under separate cover)
2. Balboa Park Master Plan amendments (under separate cover)
3. Central Mesa Precise Plan amendments (under separate cover)
4. Final Mitigated Negative Declaration (under separate cover)