



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

# Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 15, 2011 REPORT NO. HRB-11-048

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of July 28, 2011

SUBJECT: **ITEM #11 – Bertha B. Mitchell House**

APPLICANT: Oscar Ancira represented by Archaeos

LOCATION: 2121 Sunset Blvd, Uptown Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Bertha B. Mitchell House located at 2121 Sunset Blvd. as an historical resource.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Bertha B. Mitchell House located at 2121 Sunset Blvd. as a historical resource with a period of significance of c.1923 under HRB Criterion C. The designation shall exclude the three-car garage constructed in 2009. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Spanish Eclectic style architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its c.1923 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features flat gabled and hipped roof planes with a moderate pitch and clay tile; narrow eaves and exposed rafter tails; brick exterior walls; multi-paned casement windows on the lower floor and multi-paned double hung windows framed with shutters on the upper floor; and wrought iron gates and decorative wrought iron trim throughout the structure.



**Development Services Department**  
1222 First Avenue, MS 512 • San Diego, CA 92101-4155  
Tel (619) 235-5200 Fax (619) 446-5499

## BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with the owner's desire to have the site designated as a historical resource. The building is a two-story, Spanish Eclectic house located in the Mission Hills Neighborhood within the Uptown Community Planning Area.

The historic name of the resource, the Bertha B. Mitchell House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Bertha B. Mitchell, the original tenant and owner of the house.

## ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Archaeos which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria C and D. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C but not under Criterion D. This determination is consistent with the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, as follows:

*CRITERION C - Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of natural materials or craftsmanship.*

The house located at 2121 Sunset Boulevard. is a two-story brick home constructed c.1923 in the Spanish Eclectic style. The footprint is roughly "L" shaped with a walled interior courtyard. The multiple roof planes are flat gabled and hipped, with a moderate pitch and clay tile. The eaves are narrow and the rafter tails are exposed under the east wing eaves. The front façade, originally intended to be viewed from Witherby Street features a dramatic rounded corner in which a pointed arch window with colored round bottle glass is mounted. The window is set within a stone keyarch surround. A massive brick chimney is also present on this façade and is flanked by two concrete vents. The windows on the lower floor are all multi-paned casements and the upper floor windows are multi-paned double hung framed with shutters. Both upper and lower windows are capped with concrete lintels.

The house is accessed from Witherby Street through a wrought-iron gate surrounded by a brick wall which surrounds the bricked and landscaped courtyard. The entry door to the house is offset and set in stone surround with bracketed cornices decorated with carved acanthus leaves. The door is very large and is constructed of glass and metal with decorative wrought iron. The courtyard provides access to the east wing loggia. The loggia is covered with a tiled shed roof supported by square wood posts. A second brick chimney is present on the east wing second story and a third brick chimney is located on the main roof plane of the house. There is a detached garage located at the southern end of the property along Witherby Street originally constructed as a bath house in 1921.

The most significant modifications to the structure are the enclosure of the second floor loggia on the south elevation; and the removal of the original carport and guest house located at the northern end of the property which was replaced with a three-car garage along Witherby Street and a secondary entry way to the courtyard from Sunset Boulevard. These modifications were reviewed by the Historical Resources Board's Design Assistance Subcommittee (DAS) on May 4, 2005 (Attachment 2). DAS found the modifications to be consistent with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards, with some direction that was incorporated into the final project.

Overall, the house retains a good level of integrity from its c.1923 date of construction and continues to convey the character defining features of its Spanish Eclectic style design. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion C. The new three-car garage constructed in 2009 is excluded from this designation.

CRITERION D - *Is representative of a notable work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist or craftsman.*

The applicant's report recommends designation under HRB Criterion D as the work of John Parkinson and his son Donald Parkinson, who were previously established as Master Architects in 2004 (HRB Site #654). While the modifications reviewed by DAS in 2005 and completed in 2009 do not adversely impact the resource to such an extent that it is no longer eligible for designation under Criterion C as a good example of Spanish Eclectic architecture; the modifications do have a significant adverse impact on integrity of association with Parkinson & Parkinson. The original design intent of a small guest house connected to the main house by an open porte cochere, as well as a single main entry way to the courtyard, as have been lost as a result of the project. As the resource no longer reflects the original design of Parkinson & Parkinson, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion D.

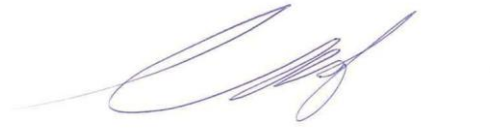
#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

If the property is designated by the HRB, conditions related to restoration or rehabilitation of the resource may be identified by staff during the Mills Act application process, and included in any future Mills Act contract.

#### CONCLUSION

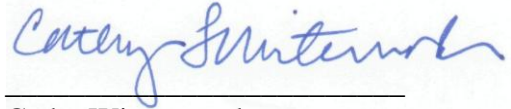
Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the Bertha B. Mitchell House located at 2121 Sunset Blvd. be designated with a period of significance of c.1923 under HRB Criterion C for the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Eclectic style. The designation shall exclude the three-car garage constructed in 2009. Designation brings with it the responsibility of maintaining the building in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The benefits of designation include the availability of the Mills Act Program for reduced property tax; the use of the more flexible Historical Building

Code; flexibility in the application of other regulatory requirements; the use of the Historical Conditional Use Permit which allows flexibility of use; and other programs which vary depending on the specific site conditions and owner objectives.



---

Jeffrey E. Oakley  
Associate Planner



---

Cathy Winterrowd  
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

JO/ks/cw

Attachment(s):

1. Draft Resolution
2. DAS Minutes and photo survey with renderings from May 4, 2005
3. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 7/28/2011

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 7/28/2011, to consider the historical designation of the **Bertha B. Mitchell House** (owned by Ancira Family Trust 04-08-98, 1335 South Prairie Ave #1701, Chicago, IL 60605) located at **2121 Sunset Boulevard, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **443-551-01-00**, further described as BLK 11 ST CLSD ADJ & POR in the City of San Diego, County of San Diego, State of California; and

WHEREAS, in arriving at their decision, the Historical Resources Board considered the historical resources report prepared by the applicant, the staff report and recommendation, all other materials submitted prior to and at the public hearing, inspected the subject property and heard public testimony presented at the hearing; and

WHEREAS, the property would be added to the Register of Designated Historical Resources as **Site No. 0**, and

WHEREAS, designated historical resources located within the City of San Diego are regulated by the Municipal Code (Chapter 14, Article 3, Division 2) as such any exterior modifications (or interior if any interior is designated) shall be approved by the City, this includes but is not limited to modifications to any windows or doors, removal or replacement of any exterior surfaces (i.e. paint, stucco, wood siding, brick), any alterations to the roof or roofing material, alterations to any exterior ornamentation and any additions or significant changes to the landscape/site.

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Historical Resources Board based its designation of the Bertha B. Mitchell House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Spanish Eclectic style architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its c.1923 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features flat gabled and hipped roof planes with a moderate pitch and clay tile; narrow eaves and exposed rafter tails; brick exterior walls; multi-paned casement windows on the lower floor and multi-paned double hung windows framed with shutters on the upper floor; and wrought iron gates and decorative wrought iron trim throughout the structure. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in light of the foregoing, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego hereby approves the historical designation of the above named property. The designation includes the parcel and the exterior of the residential building as Designated Historical Resource **Site No. 0**. The designation shall exclude the three-car garage constructed in 2009.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Secretary to the Historical Resources Board shall cause this resolution to be recorded in the office of the San Diego County Recorder at no fee, for the benefit of the City of San Diego, and with no documentary tax due.

Vote: N/A

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
JOHN LEMMO, Chair  
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND  
LEGALITY: JAN I. GOLDSMITH,  
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
KEITH BAUERLE  
Deputy City Attorney

# CITY OF SAN DIEGO HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD

## DESIGN ASSISTANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

May 4, 2005

4<sup>th</sup> Floor Large Conference Room  
City Administration Building  
202 C Street, San Diego, CA

## MEETING RECORD

### 1. ATTENDANCE

Boardmembers: David Marshall, Marsha Sewell, Laura Burnett, Homer Delawie  
(David Marshall recused himself on the Egyptian Theatre, Wonderbread Building and NTC Building 210/Fitness Center projects)

Staff: Michael Tudury, Lorraine Roley

Guests: Ancira Residence: Mark Christopher, architect  
Egyptian Theatre: Eric Smith and Kristian Zaspel, AVRPA architect  
Wonderbread Building Project: Mike LaBarre, architect; Marie Lia, attorney; Rich Gustafson, CityMark development  
NTC Bldg 210/Fitness Center: Brian Rickling, architect; Jeff Rogers, C. W. Clark development

**Note: The Cosmopolitan Square Project (The Palatine Project) was continued to a future agenda.**

### 2. Public Comment

None

### 3. Ancira Residence Remodel:

Background: Per last meeting's agenda: The owner of the 11,000 s.f. residence at 2121 Sunset Blvd. in Mission Hills is proposing to bring forward the house for historic designation in the near future. The remodel proposes to remove an existing chauffeur's quarters that is adjacent to the primary pedestrian entrance, and to replace it with a three-car garage. The proposed project has been submitted for a building permit and the owner is seeking direction from the subcommittee regarding the proposed remodel prior to consideration of designation.

Mark Christopher, the Ancira's architect, who was unable to attend our April DAS meeting, presented another option with a gable roof facing Sunset Blvd in lieu of the flat roof, and a 2 ft. recess between the 2-car garage portion and the single-car garage that he believed may be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for

Rehabilitation. Mr. Christopher also indicated proposed paint colors: medium sandy color at brick; brown "rusty" color at metal (to suggest age); and hand removal of paint (not sandblasting) at wood columns and beams to show the original wood. The wood would be clear-sealed. Mr. Christopher also indicated that he would like to raise the windows in the Sunset Blvd elevation of the garage from that shown on the drawings presented.

Boardmember Comments:

David Marshall inquired about the reuse of material and the architect responded as follows. He indicated that the original roof tiles would be "laced in" with new roof tiles to retain the roof character. He also noted the intent to reuse the existing windows and iron grillwork - if it is possible to salvage these items. New "Cantera" stone lintels with corbels at the ends that are slightly different from those on the existing residence will be used together with the existing stone lintels, again, if they can be salvaged.

Marsha Sewell was concerned about the differentiation between the new and the existing, the architect indicated that the color of the new would be slightly different as would be the brick coursing. She also was concerned about the continuation of concrete for the hardscape in the driveway in front of the new garage. Using the same antique stone for the hardscape in some sort of design such as bands.

Laura Burnett expressed her concern regarding simplifying and reducing the paving pattern and materials. The architect responded by indicating that the amount of new paving is less than the existing paving it replaces. Bands of European antique stone pavers will be used at the main entry as well as for accents at the garage entry. Homer Delawie was comfortable with the design.

In general, the subcommittee was pleased with the proposed new design and felt it met the Secretary of Interior Standards.

Public Comment: (SOHO)

Bruce Coons suggested that the paved centerpiece of the driveway is unnecessary. Mr. Christopher indicated that he felt it was necessary to provide for a dedicated pathway for pedestrians.

David Swarens agreed that the north elevation was made better by raising the windows. He also suggested that historical scrapings at the windows be considered for the paint colors at walls and windows.

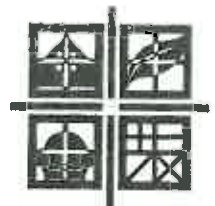
4. Egyptian Theatre: (David Marshall recusal)

Background: The architect, Eric Smith of Austin Veum Robbins Architects, presented several design details of the proposed reconstruction project. The primary issues were the reconstruction of the cartouche panels above the entry doors and the ticket booth choices. Mr. Smith indicated that the exterior wall color would be a light "sandy brown"



**ANCIRA RESIDENCE  
PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY**

**MARK LEE CHRISTOPHER, ARCHITECT**  
ARCHITECTURE & INTERIOR PLANNING



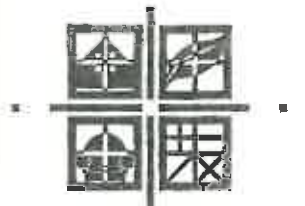
3150 W. Washington Street • San Diego, Ca. 92119  
Tel: 619.296.3794 Fax: 619.296.2771 [mlc@mlcinc.com](mailto:mlc@mlcinc.com)



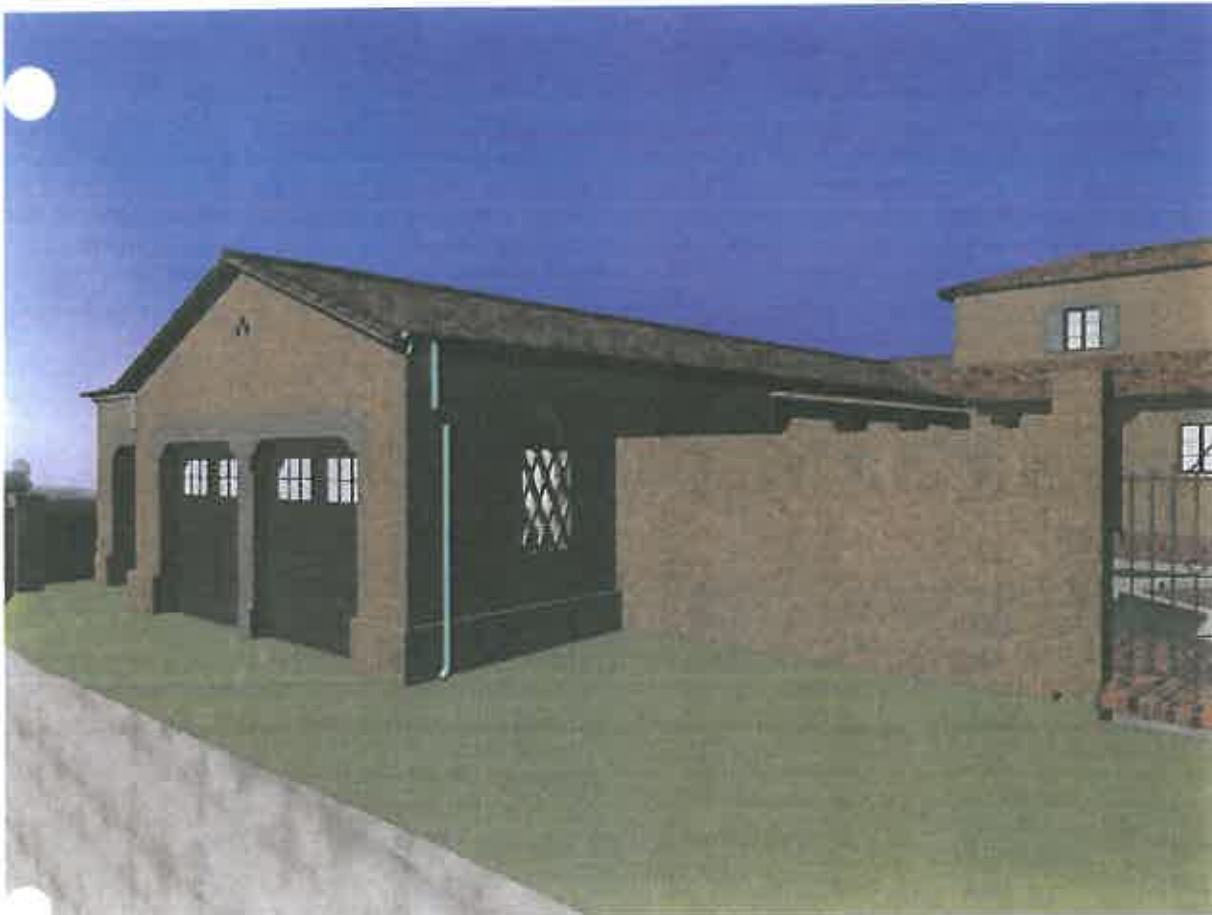


**ANCIRA RESIDENCE  
PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY**

**MARK LEE CHRISTOPHER, ARCHITECT**  
ARCHITECTURE & INTERIOR PLANNING

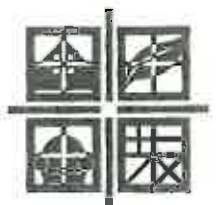


2150 W. Washington Street • San Diego, Ca. 92119  
Tel: 619.296.2796 Fax: 619.296.3788 mail@mlcarch.com

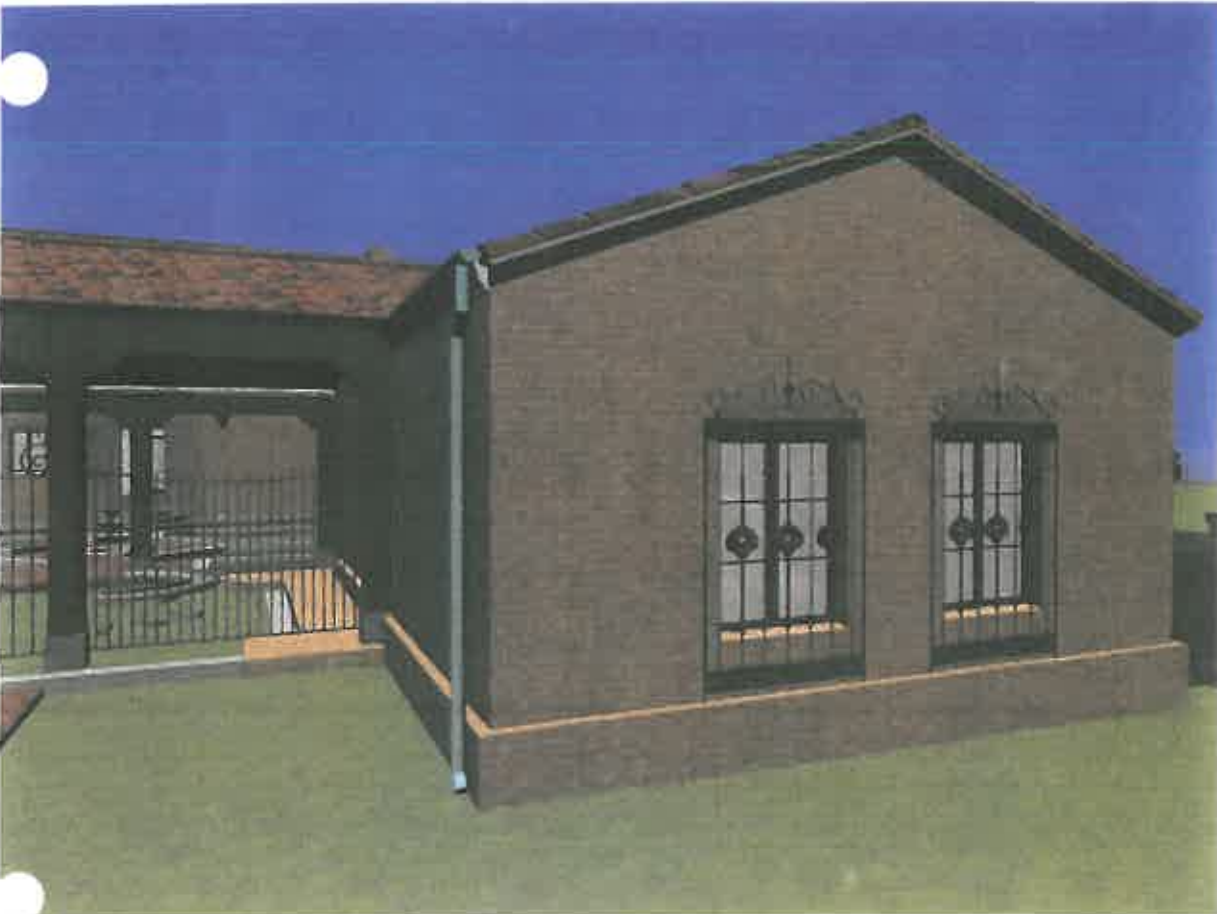


**ANCIRA RESIDENCE  
PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY**

**MARK LEE CHRISTOPHER, ARCHITECT**  
ARCHITECTURE & INTERIOR PLANNING

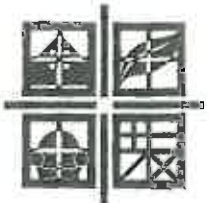


2150 W. Washington Street • San Diego, Ca. 92110  
Tel: 619.296.2796 Fax: 619.296.2763 mail@mlcusa.com



**ANCIRA RESIDENCE  
PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY**

MARK LEE CHRISTOPHER, ARCHITECT  
ARCHITECTURE & INTERIOR PLANNING

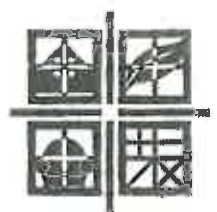


2150 W. Washington Street • San Diego, Ca. 92115  
Tel: 619.296.2795 Fax: 619.296.2700 mlc@mlcinc.com



**ANCIRA RESIDENCE  
PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY**

**MARK LEE CHRISTOPHER, ARCHITECT**  
ARCHITECTURE & INTERIOR PLANNING

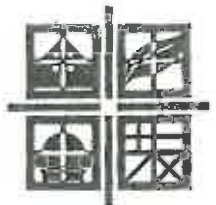


2150 W. Washington Street • San Diego, Ca. 92110  
Tel: 619.296.2796 Fax: 619.296.2793 mllc@mlcfa.com

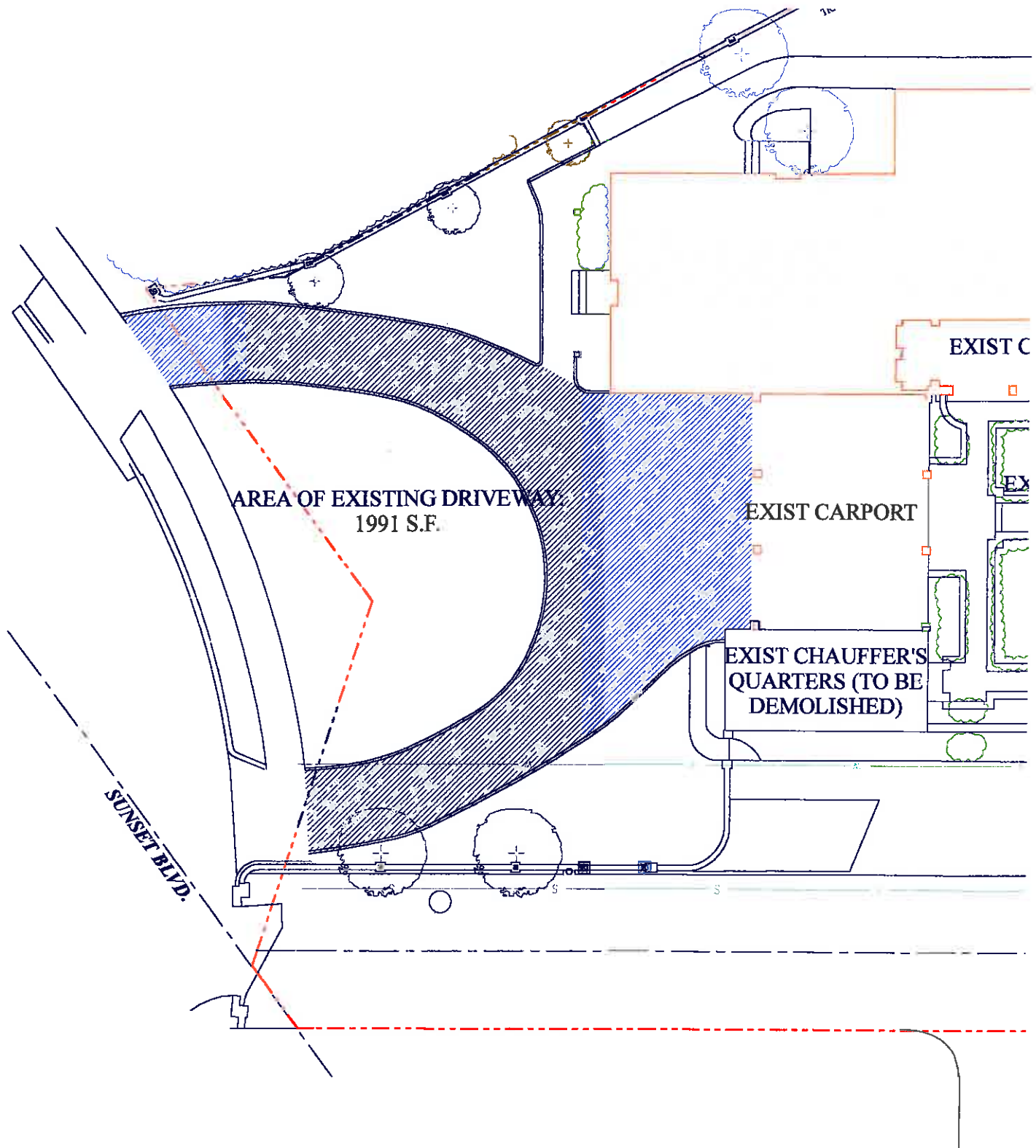


**ANCIRA RESIDENCE  
PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY**

**MARK LEE CHRISTOPHER, ARCHITECT**  
ARCHITECTURE & INTERIOR PLANNING



2150 W. Washington Street • San Diego, Ca. 92110  
Tel: 619.296.2796 Fax: 619.296.2710 ml@mlca.com



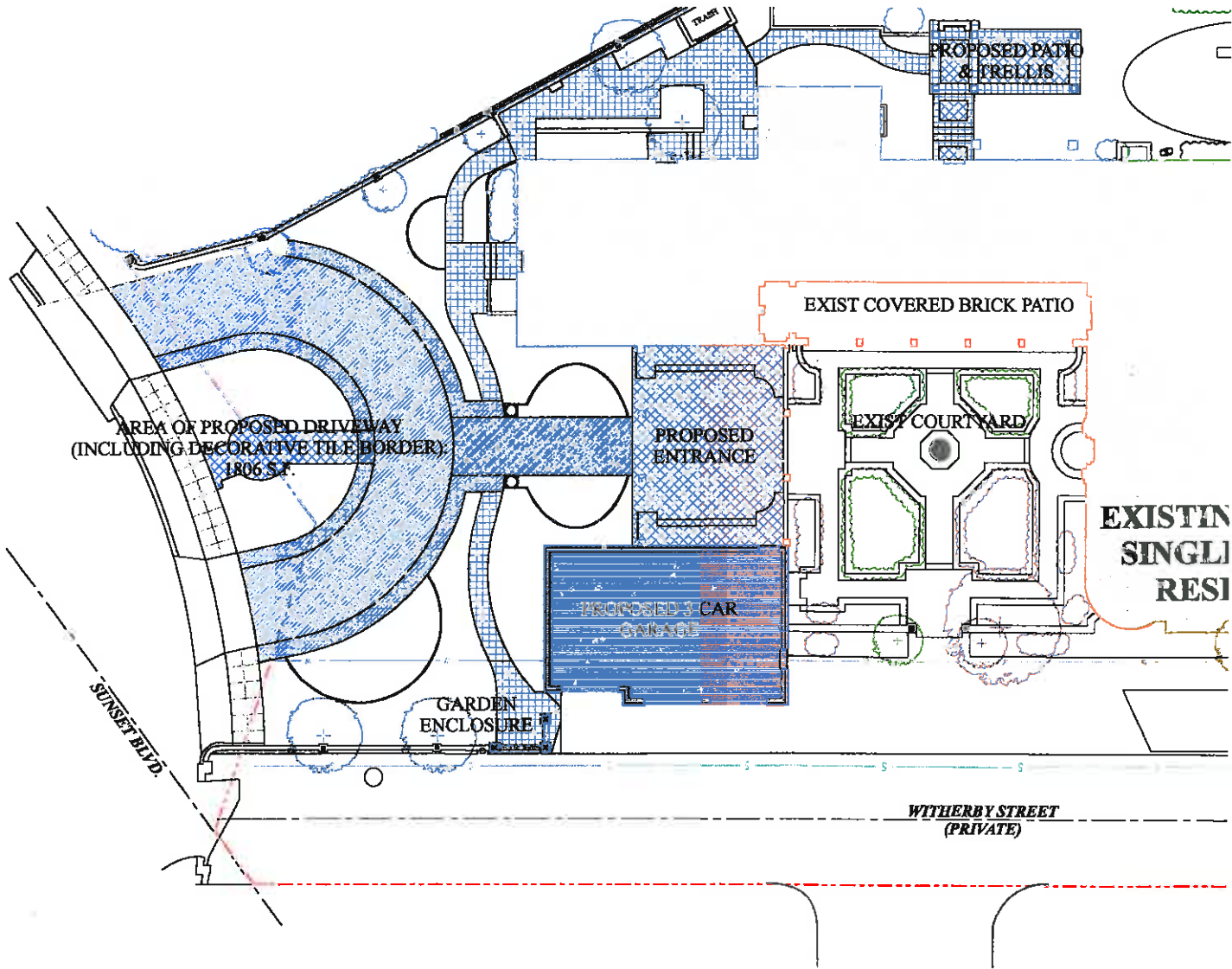
AREA OF EXISTING DRIVEWAY  
1991 S.F.

EXIST CARPORT

EXIST CHAUFFER'S  
QUARTERS (TO BE  
DEMOLISHED)

EXIST C

SUNSET BLVD.



AREA OF PROPOSED DRIVEWAY  
(INCLUDING DECORATIVE TILE BORDER)  
1806 S.F.

PROPOSED PATIO  
& TRELIS

EXIST COVERED BRICK PATIO

PROPOSED  
ENTRANCE

EXIST COURT YARD

PROPOSED 3 CAR  
GARAGE

GARDEN  
ENCLOSURE

EXISTIN  
SINGLI  
RESI

SUNSET BLVD

WITHERBY STREET  
(PRIVATE)