

## **Schedule B – Project Narrative & Statement of Findings** *Updated February 12, 2024*

### **Introduction**

The City of Stamford (the “City”) has seen growth envied by peer communities across the State of Connecticut. The City has endeavored to ensure growth is complimented by the preservation of historic buildings and features within the community. Towards that end, the City has recognized that “it is now more important than ever...to maintain the character of historic districts and structures and ensure that new development is in keeping with the City’s historic character.”<sup>1</sup> One well-tested method of facilitating the preservation of historic buildings is using zoning incentives to “encourage preservation and rehabilitation of significant historic structures through special use permits and density incentives.”<sup>2</sup>

The City is also invested in building a safe and diverse housing stock. A diversity of housing options ensures current and future residents from various backgrounds are able to make Stamford their home. In 2022, the City adopted a comprehensive a comprehensive Housing Affordability Plan (the “Affordability Plan”). In July 2023, Mayor Caroline Simmons issued an Executive Order addressing the housing crisis, which, among other things, calls for the “creation of more family size units (2 bedrooms and larger)” and a reduction of “barriers to developing a diverse typology of rental and homeownership units for families at all income levels.”<sup>3</sup>

In 2021, KCI Summer Street, LLC (the “Applicant”) purchased the Property located at 1911 Summer Street, Stamford, Connecticut (the “Property”), highlighted in the below aerial image.<sup>4</sup> The Property is located on the corners of Fifth Street and Summer Street.



<sup>1</sup> Stamford Master Plan 2015 – 2025 (the “Master Plan”), pg. 159.

<sup>2</sup> Master Plan, pg. 163.

<sup>3</sup> See Executive Order – Stamford Housing Affordability Initiative, pgs. 2 & 3.

<sup>4</sup> Aerial image obtained from Google Maps Services.

The Applicant was drawn to the Property by the historic nature of the existing structure, which was constructed in 1914 (the “Historic Structure”). The Historic Structure features a porch with Tuscan columns, several bays, hip roofs, dormers, and a decorative cornice under the roof. Despite its age, there have been minimal renovations to the Historic Structure, which maintains many original interior and exterior features. The Historic Structure was commissioned by Edward B. Hoit. Mr. Hoit was a pioneer in the City’s business community, as the founder of the Grand Central Market and local real estate developer.



Other improvements to the Property include a paved surface parking lot that takes up the remainder of the Fifth Street frontage. This paved parking lot detracts from the streetscape. Given the centralized location of the Property, the paved parking area provides an opportunity for infill development that is in keeping with the historic structure located on the Property, and that will help achieve the City’s historic preservation and housing goals.

## **History**

The Historic Structure was first built in 1914.<sup>6</sup> The Property has been utilized for both commercial (office) and residential purposes. As stated above, the Historic Structure was built by Mr. Hoit, a leader in the City’s business community in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Mr. Hoit was one of the partners in the Ayres Brothers & Hoit subdivision in 1890, which resulted in the creation of 96 residential lots between Summer Street and Bedford Street. The Property was one of the 96 lots created as part of this subdivision. Mr. Hoit was careful to make sure that that the Historic Structure was architecturally cohesive with the surrounding community.

## **Project Area and Development Site**

In total, the Property is 7,038.7 sf. Approximately 5,164.6 sf of the Property is located in the C-L Zone, and the remaining 1,874.1 sf is located in the C-B Zone. The Property is a corner lot, fronting on both Summer Street and Fifth Street. The Property is surrounded by residential and commercial uses, including a Webster Bank branch at 1959 Summer Street, the Greenbriar Condominium (27 units) at 1900 Summer Street, and Brighton Court Condominium (37 units) at 1864 Summer Street. The Property is also within walking distance to the Ridgeway Shopping Center, Scalzi Park, the businesses and restaurants on both Summer Street and Bedford Street, and

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<sup>5</sup> A portrait of Mr. Hoit obtained from the Stamford Historical Society.

<sup>6</sup> A copy of a Field Card obtained from the Stamford Tax Assessor,

Downtown Stamford. The Property is designated as Category 4 (Residential – Medium Density Multifamily).

### **Description of Proposed Development**

The Applicant proposes to preserve and maintain the Historic Structure located on the Property for residential use and construct a 4-story addition over the existing parking lot containing 4 townhome style apartments. Each home will contain 3 bedrooms. The proposed addition will feature bays like those found on the Historic Structure. There will be a continuous decorative trim band running along the entire façade of the proposed addition. This band will line up with the decorative cornice on the Historic Structure. The windows will be wood with vinyl exterior double hung type. The proportions and character of these windows will be like the existing windows of the Historic Structure. The Proposed addition will also have a stone base matching the stone base at the existing house, cementations siding (Hardie Plank) which is similar in appearance to cedar siding, and architectural grade composite roofing with shadow lines. Enhanced site landscaping, storm water systems and onsite parking are also proposed. The proposal is depicted in the below rendering.



Approval of the proposal will ensure that the Historic Structure remains a part of the streetscape it has anchored for over 100 years. In accordance with Section 7.3 of the Zoning Regulations of the City of Stamford (the “Zoning Regulations”), the Applicant will execute a Historic Preservation Façade Agreement ensuring the preservation and maintenance of the Historic Structure.

Approval of the project will also result in the preservation of 1 apartment home and the construction of 4 apartment homes in the midst of a housing crisis impacting City residents from



all walks of life. The Applicant intends to market all 5 apartment homes for rent. These apartments will add to the diversity of housing choices available to current and future City residents and present a unique living opportunity for those looking for a “missing middle” housing opportunity in between a single family home and a studio or 1 bedroom apartment in the heart of Downtown Stamford. Residents who will one day call the Property home will also likely support local businesses conveniently located within walking distance of the Property. It is noteworthy that many desirable amenities are within walking distance of the Property, including the Stop and Shop and LA Fitness at the Ridgeway Shopping Center, Scalzi Park and the several businesses and restaurants along Summer Street, Bedford Street, and those within the Downtown. This centralized location will likely encourage pedestrian, rather than vehicular travel to and from the Property. 6 parking spaces are also proposed in accordance with Section 7.3 of the Zoning Regulations/ According to the enclosed Traffic Analysis prepared by Kimley-Horn (the “Traffic Analysis”), a maximum of 5 parking spaces are required to support the proposed multifamily community.<sup>7</sup>

### **Requested Approvals**

To facilitate this proposal, the Applicant seeks approval of the following applications:

- (1) An application to include the Historic Structure located on the Property on the Cultural Resources Inventory pursuant to Sec. 7.3.B.2.c of the Zoning Regulations of the City of Stamford (the “Zoning Regulations”).
- (2) A Text Amendment Application proposing amendments to Section 7.3 of the Zoning Regulations. The proposed amendments will facilitate the construction of residential uses located on corner lots, and to grant the Stamford Zoning Board the authority to reduce setbacks applicable to onsite parking areas;
- (3) A Site Plan Application pursuant to Sections 7.3 and 19.D to permit the construction of the proposal.
- (4) A Special Permit Application pursuant to Section 7.3 and 19.C seeking the following Special Permit requests:
  - i. Special Permit Approval pursuant to Sec. 7.3.C.4.d of the Zoning Regulations to permit Building Coverage of 3,849 sf in lieu of 3,331.94 sf.
  - ii. Special Permit Approval pursuant to Sec. 7.3.C.3.a. of the Zoning Regulations to permit 1 parking space per proposed dwelling unit.
  - iii. Special Permit Approval pursuant to Sec. 7.3.C.3.c (as proposed in the Text Amendment Application) to permit the location of onsite parking within the setbacks established by Table 12.5 (Minimum Distances of Parking Areas from Lot Lines and Buildings) of the Zoning Regulations.

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<sup>7</sup> Pursuant to Section 7.3 of the Zoning Regulations, no more than 1 parking space is required for each proposed apartment home.

- iv. Special Permit Approval pursuant to Sec. 7.3.C.4.b (as proposed in the Text Amendment Application) to permit the proposed addition to be located 5' from the Front Lot Line located along Fifth Street.
  - v. Special Permit Approval pursuant to Sec. 7.3.C.4.b (as proposed in the Text Amendment Application) to permit a Side Yard Setback from the southerly lot line of 10' in lieu of 15' in the C-L Zone (note 6' Side Yard required in the C-B Zone).
  - vi. Special Permit Approval pursuant to Sec. 7.3.c.4.e to permit Light And Air along the south side of the Property of no less than 20'.
  - vii. Special Permit Approval pursuant to 7.3.c.4.h (as proposed in the Text Amendment Application) to permit Useable Open Space with a minimum dimension of 16.93' in lieu of 20'.
- (5) Special Permit Approval pursuant to Section 12.A.1 to allow parking stall width of 8.5' in lieu of 9'.
- (6) Administrative Approval from the Zoning Board pursuant to Sec. 12.K.5 to maintain the existing 5' wide sidewalk and 2.6' planted buffer located along the Fifth Street Frontage of the Property.
- (7) Administrative Approval from the Zoning Board pursuant to Sec. 12.J.4.a(5) and 12.K.5. to maintain a 5.5' sidewalk along the Summer Street Frontage of the Property, and the locate all required street trees along said frontage along the easterly side of the proposed sidewalk.

**Statement of Findings**

**1. Site Plan Standards**

The proposal is consistent with the Site Plan standards (Section 19.D) and of the Zoning Regulations as follows:

a. Site Plan Standards

*In reviewing site plans the Zoning Board shall take into consideration the purpose of these Regulations, including the purpose of the applicable zoning district and the goals and policies of the Stamford Master Plan, the public health, safety and general welfare and convenience of the general public and the maintenance of property values. In its review the Board may modify a site plan or condition an approval to the extent necessary to conform the site plan to the following standards and objectives:*

- (1) *Safe, adequate and convenient vehicular traffic circulation, operation, parking and loading, and pedestrian circulation, both within and without the site.*
  - (a) *The number, locations and dimensions of all vehicular and pedestrian access drives and walkways, parking spaces, drop-off and loading areas, and provisions for*

*handicapped access shall conform to the standards of Section 12 of these Regulations, to the adopted design criteria and engineering practices of the Dept. of Traffic and Parking, and all other applicable standards. Such areas shall be constructed of suitable hard surface materials and maintained in good condition.*

The number, locations and dimensions of all vehicular and pedestrian access drives and walkways, parking spaces, drop-off areas, loading areas, and handicapped access areas conform to the applicable provisions of Sections 7.3 and 12 of the Zoning Regulations.

The proposal has been designed in accordance with Section 7.3 of the Zoning Regulations, which requires 1 parking space for each dwelling unit associated with a historic preservation redevelopment. This ratio would require 5 parking spaces for the 5 apartment homes proposed. A total of 6 parking spaces are provided on the Property, 1 more than required by the Zoning Regulations. 4 parking spaces will be located within enclosed garages below the proposed addition. 2 additional parking spaces will be located to the south of the proposed addition. As stated in the enclosed Traffic Analysis a maximum of 5 parking spaces are required to support the proposed multifamily community.

- (b) The number of vehicle access drives shall be minimized and shall be located and designed to provide safe and convenient turning movements and safe sightline as determined in accordance with the Geometric Highway Design Standards of the Conn. Dept. of Transportation.*

Vehicular access the Property will be provided along Fifth Street as shown on the enclosed plans. The width and location of the curb cut is in accordance with the applicable standards of the Zoning Regulations.

- (c) Area streets and traffic controls shall be determined to have adequate capacity to service the site without causing undue congestion or hazardous conditions.*

As stated in the enclosed Traffic Analysis, the proposed multifamily use of the Property will generate fewer trips than office uses that previously occupied the Property, and could occupy the Property in the future.

The Property is located in walking distance to several desirable amenities, including the Stop and Shop and LA Fitness located at the Ridgeway Shopping Center. This convenient location will allow future residents of the Property to walk, rather than drive, to shop for groceries and other daily necessities. The Property is also within walking distance of the myriad of businesses and restaurants along Bedford Street, Summer Street and within the Downtown. These nearby amenities and destinations will encourage pedestrian travel, rather than vehicular travel, to and from the Property.

No bike parking spaces are required by the Zoning Regulations. However, future residents of the new units will have the ability to park bikes within the proposed parking

level of each dwelling unit. A bike rack will also be provided to accommodate residents of the Historic Structure, who may also store bikes within said structure.

The surrounding streets can adequately accommodate the traffic associated with the proposal. For a more complete discussion of the traffic impact please see the enclosed Traffic Analysis.

(2) *The protection of environmental quality, landscaping of open space and harmony with existing development. The Board shall take into consideration the following features and standards:*

(a) *The location, height, design and materials of walls, fences, hedges and plantings shall be appropriate to the vicinity and shall suitably screen parking, loading, garbage collection facilities, outside storage areas, accessway drives, utility installations and other such features; such landscaping shall be appropriate to the general character of the vicinity and consider the proximity and nature of abutting uses and the level of use of adjoining public streets and walkways.*

Over 1,000 sf of at grade open space is proposed pursuant to the companion text change. In addition, roof terraces (approx.. 333 sf) will be located above the 4 apartment homes in the proposed addition. Street trees and other pedestrian level improvements are in compliance with the applicable provisions of the Zoning Regulations, and are appropriate for the general character of the surrounding neighborhood.

(b) *All open space areas, exclusive of undisturbed natural areas, shall be suitably landscaped to the satisfaction of the Board. Site landscaping shall be performed at a minimum dollar value equivalent to one shade tree of 2.5 inch caliper for every two hundred (200) square feet of landscaped area. In multi-family developments, open space shall be designed to provide functional outdoor living and play areas meeting the needs of intended residents.*

The Applicant proposes maintaining onsite landscaping in accordance with the standards of the Zoning Regulations as further detailed within the enclosed Landscape Plan.

(c) *Soil erosion, sediment and the release of excessive dust shall be controlled through implementation of suitable short term and long term controls in accordance with the standards and procedures of Section 15-B.*

Comprehensive Civil Plans depicting storm water, soil erosion and sediment control features prepared by Ahneman Kirby are enclosed with this application. These plans ensure the standards and procedures of Section 15-B of the Regulations are satisfied.

(d) *Site development shall seek to preserve existing specimen trees, historic structures and other significant natural features of the site. Accordingly, the premature demolition*

*and site clearance of prospective development sites is specifically discouraged and may be taken into consideration in subsequent site plan reviews.*

Approval of the application will result in the preservation of the Historic Structure that has been located on the Property since 1914.

- (e) *Artificial lighting, and site generated noise, odors, particles and other disturbances shall be controlled to avoid interference with the use and enjoyment of neighboring properties. The location, height, design and arrangement of outside lighting shall be consistent with safety such as to avoid glare on any other lot and to avoid hazards to traffic on any street.*

All artificial lighting and site generated noise and other disturbance shall be controlled and will not interfere with the use and enjoyment of the neighboring properties. Furthermore, the location, height, design and arrangement of outside lighting shall be consistent with safety to avoid glare on any other lot and to avoid hazards to traffic on adjacent roadways.

- (f) *Available public utilities shall be adequate in capacity to safely service the requirements of the site. Surface water drainage facilities shall be adequate to safely drain the site while minimizing the risk of downstream flooding and erosion. Where infrastructure capacity is judged not to be adequate the Board may accept a binding agreement to perform suitable improvements.*

A comprehensive drainage plan and drainage report is submitted with the enclosed materials. The plans illustrate the adequacy and availability of public utilities for the site. Additionally, the drainage report shows surface water drainage facilities will sufficiently and safely drain the Property while minimizing the risk of downstream flooding and erosion and adverse impacts.

- (g) *Adequate provision shall be made for emergency vehicle access, fire lanes, and safe fire flows, upon the recommendation of the Fire Marshall and the public water utility.*

Emergency first responders will be able to access the Property safely and conveniently.

- (h) *The arrangement, location, apparent bulk, architectural features, materials, texture and color of proposed buildings and structures shall establish an architectural character and overall site design compatible with the scale and general character of the vicinity.*

The proposed addition is designed to be cohesive with and respectful of the existing Historic Structure to be preserved and maintained. The addition will feature a blend of high-quality materials, including facing stone, Hardie plank siding, Azak trim, double hung wood windows with vinyl exterior, architectural grade roofing shingles. As depicted on the enclosed architectural plans, the proposed addition will include points



of interest such as bay windows, pitched roofs and a stone base along the Fifth Street frontage of the Property.

- (i) *Building setbacks and the configuration of open space shall be appropriate to the existing structures on adjoining properties and established patterns of use of side and rear yard areas, and to the existing physical conditions of the site.*

The Historic Structure will remain in its current location, anchoring the corner of Summer Street and Fifth Street. The Applicant proposes maintaining robust landscaping throughout the Property.

- (j) *No use shall be permitted that will cause or result in:*  
*-dissemination of dust, smoke, observable gas or fumes, odor, noise or vibration beyond the immediate site of the building in which such use is conducted, or*  
*-unusual hazard of fire or explosion or other physical hazard to any adjacent buildings,*  
*or*  
*-harmful discharge of liquid materials, or*  
*-unusual traffic hazard or congestion due to the type of vehicles required in the use or due to the manner in which traffic enters or leaves the site of the use.*

No nuisance or hazardous conditions are anticipated, consistent with the engineering materials provided herein.

- (k) *All buildings and grounds and other structures shall be maintained in good repair and in safe, clean and sanitary condition. All landscaping required pursuant to an approved site plan shall be installed to the satisfaction of the Director of Parks and Recreation and shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with an agreement to be made part of the application of record, which agreement shall be enforced by the Zoning Enforcement Officer, upon advice of the Director.*

The Applicants are amenable to a condition of approval requiring the execution of a Landscape Maintenance Agreement and a Drainage Maintenance Agreement prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

## **2. Special Permit Standards**

The Application complies with Section 19-3.2 of the Zoning Regulations as follows:

*Special Permits shall be granted by the reviewing board only upon a finding that the proposed use or structure or the proposed extension or alteration of an existing use or structure is in accord with the public convenience and welfare after taking into account, where appropriate:*

- 1) *The location and nature of the proposed site including its size and configuration, the proposed size, scale and arrangement of structures, drives and parking areas and the proximity of existing dwellings and other structures.*

5 apartment homes are proposed for the Property, approximately 55% of the residential density permitted under the Zoning Regulations.<sup>8</sup> The proposed addition complies with the underlying Building Height standards of the C-L and C-B Zones. Proposed setbacks will not adversely impact neighboring uses and facilitate the preservation of the Historic Structure and the construction of an addition will enhance the Fifth Street streetscape, especially when compared to the existing, underused paved parking area.

- 2) *The nature and intensity of the proposed use in relation to its site and the surrounding area. Operations in connection with special permit uses shall not be injurious to the neighborhood, shall be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of these Regulations, and shall not be more objectionable to nearby properties by reason of noise, fumes, vibration, artificial lighting or other potential disturbances to the health, safety or peaceful enjoyment of property than the public necessity demands.*

The proposed multifamily community will have no adverse impact whatsoever on the surrounding community by reason of noise, fumes, vibration, artificial lighting or other potential disturbance to the health, safety or peaceful enjoyment of property that the public necessity demands. The proposed addition to and preservation of the Historic Building will enhance the neighborhood.

- 3) *The resulting traffic patterns, the adequacy of existing streets to accommodate the traffic associated with the proposed use, the adequacy of proposed off-street parking and loading, and the extent to which proposed driveways may cause a safety hazard, or traffic nuisance.*

The Property is located in walking distance to several desirable amenities, including Sclazi Park and the Stop and Shop and LA Fitness located at the Ridgeway Shopping Center. This convenient location will allow future residents of the Property to walk, rather than drive, to shop for groceries and other daily necessities. The Property is also within walking distance to the myriad of businesses and restaurants along Bedford Street, Summer Street and within the Downtown. As such, it is anticipated that a substantial number of future residents will utilize alternative modes of transportation.

No bike parking spaces are required by the Zoning Regulations. However, future residents of the new units will have the ability to park bikes within the proposed parking level of each dwelling unit.

The surrounding streets can adequately accommodate the traffic associated with the proposal. For a more complete discussion of the traffic impact please see the enclosed Traffic Analysis.

- 4) *The nature of the surrounding area and the extent to which the proposed use or feature might impair its present and future development.*

The surrounding area is home to commercial and residential uses alike. Notable neighboring properties include the Ridgeway Shopping Center, the Greenbriar

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<sup>8</sup> A maximum of 9 units are permitted under the Zoning Regulations.

Condominium (27 units) at 1900 Summer Street, and Brighton Court Condominium (37 units) at 1864 Summer Street. The proposed preservation of the Historic Building, combined with the construction of the proposed addition, will result in the creation of 5 apartment homes that will be a welcome addition to the neighborhood, and will encourage, rather than impair, present and future development within the surrounding area.

- 5) *The Master Plan of the City of Stamford and all statements of the purpose and intent of these regulations.*

The Property is within Master Plan Category 4 (Residential – Medium Density Multi-Family). Category 4 is “intended to provide for and protect medium-density multifamily development...in areas characterized by a mixture of apartment, condominium, attached row house or detached residential mid-rise structures” and other non-residential uses supportive of such communities.<sup>9</sup> The proposal is in keeping with the goals and purposes of Category 4. The proposal will also further the City’s larger policy goals of preserving historic structures, and providing a diverse housing stock for City residents from at various life stages.

### **3. Sec. 7.3 Standards**

The Application complies with Section 7.3.C.1 of the Zoning Regulations as follows:

*An application for Special Permit under this Subsection shall be required to meet the criteria of Section 19.C.2 and the following findings and conditions:*

- a. *Proposed use and site plan are compatible with and implement the objectives and policies of Stamford's Master Plan;*

The Property is within Master Plan Category 4 (Residential – Medium Density Multi-Family). Category 4 is “intended to provide for and protect medium-density multifamily development...in areas characterized by a mixture of apartment, condominium, attached row house or detached residential mid-rise structures” and other non-residential uses supportive of such communities.<sup>10</sup> The proposal is in keeping with the goals and purposes of Category 4. The proposal will also further the City’s larger policy goals of preserving historic structures, and providing a diverse housing stock for City residents from at various life stages.

- b. *Proposed use and site plan are superior to a plan conforming to the standard dimensional requirements and use standards of the underlying zoning district and will not impair the future development of the surrounding area;*

The setback standards of the underlying C-L and C-B Zones would prevent the construction of an addition that is architecturally cohesive with the Historic Structure. In fact, the relief from the underlying setback and coverage standards is modest when compared to the

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<sup>9</sup> Master Plan, pg. 193.

<sup>10</sup> Master Plan, pg. 193.

alternative, which would be to seek a Historic Preservation Bonus from the underlying Building Height standards, which could result in a building up to 5 stories/60' tall. Adequate Light & Air will be provided and will further facilitate the preservation of the Historic Structure and construction of additional housing to serve City residents.

The underlying parking standards would similarly prevent the construction of an addition that will increase the diversity of the City's housing stock in the midst of a national housing crisis. As noted in the enclosed Traffic Analysis, the proposed 5 apartment homes will only require 5 parking spaces, and 6 onsite parking spaces are provided. Adherence to the underlying parking standards found in the Zoning Regulations will require the construction of unneeded parking and prevent the construction of desperately needed homes.

- c. *Proposed use and site and architectural plans serve to rehabilitate, restore, Critically Reconstruct, or preserve Historic Structures or Sites, and meet the HPAC guidelines for Historic Preservation (once they are recommended by HPAC and adopted by the Zoning Board), or the appropriate Standards and Guidelines of the Secretary of the Interior, as amended from time to time and published on the National Park Service website, as applied by HPAC and the Zoning Board; and*

The proposal will result in the preservation of the Historic Structure located on the Property. As a condition of approval, the Applicant will execute a Historic Façade Easement in accordance with Section 7.3 of the Zoning Regulations.

- d. *The loss of said Historic Structure or Historic Site would be detrimental to the neighborhood character, Local Historic District or the cultural and historical heritage and identity of the City of Stamford.*

The Historic Structure has anchored the corner of Summer Street and Fifth Street for over 100 years. The Historic Structure retains many original interior and exterior elements, and was commissioned by a significant figure in the City's history. Given the nature of the underlying zoning districts, the loss of the Historic Structure would likely make way for a 4-story, rectangular office building over a paved parking area, which is less desirable than the preservation of a historic structure, and the construction of housing opportunities for current and future City residents.

## **Conclusion**

The proposed preservation of the Historic Structure and construction of the proposed addition are in furtherance of the City's preservation and housing goals. If approved, the proposed residential community will preserve a building that has been part of the fabric of the streetscape for over 100 years.