



## CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS STAFF REPORT

**Meeting Date:** June 4, 2013  
**To:** Honorable Mayor & City Council  
**From:** Steven Zoet, Director of Community Services  
**Subject:** Approval of the Design Elements Associated with the Historical Renovation of Beverly Gardens Park and Review of Environmental Assessment  
**Attachments:** Categorical Exemption  
CEQA Compliance Review  
Project Renderings

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### INTRODUCTION

In the Spring of 2012, local lifelong resident, businessman and philanthropist Steve Gordon approached the City proposing a partnership whereby he was seeking approval to privately fundraise monies sufficient to cover anticipated costs associated with restoring elements of Beverly Gardens Park to historical standards. Desired improvements include, amongst others, reintroduction of the lily pond that existed in front of the Beverly Hills sign between Beverly and Canon Drives; restoration of the park's fountains; restoration of the historic Cactus Garden and several other structural and grounds improvement elements. Staff and Mr. Gordon presented this proposal to City Council at its January 24, 2012 meeting. City Council approved Mr. Gordon's request and directed staff to assist him in appropriate ways that would help facilitate his cause.

### DISCUSSION

Over the course of the past many months, Mr. Gordon and his staff have facilitated numerous successful fundraising ventures and a substantial amount of funds have been deposited into the City's recently established Community Charitable Foundation for purposes of eventually funding the desired park improvements. In the interim, Mr. Gordon retained the services of renowned local landscape architect Mia Lehrer to work with staff and develop plans for restoring the park to much of its historical grandeur.

Beverly Gardens Park is considered a local landmark and any proposed changes are required to be evaluated in accordance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines and standards. Staff from Community Development reviewed the proposed project for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and found that the project is designed in a manner that is consistent with CEQA and the Secretary

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of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings. These standards include rehabilitating and restoring landscaping including trees; repairing and restoring hardscape such as paths and curbs; repairing, restoring and reconstructing the historic lily pond; and, repairing and restoring small structures such as pergolas and other park features. Additionally, an existing restroom structure is intended for future renovation and minimal expansion to accommodate greater demands than it was originally designed for. This modification, based on the additional proposed square footage, is likewise consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

The project as proposed qualifies for a categorical exemption under Class 31 (Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation) and under the procedures adopted by the City of Beverly Hills. Additional minor modifications may occur in future phases but all intended site modifications have been addressed and reviewed and no further environmental assessment is required based on the plans submitted for review.

Minor modifications to the park's existing conditions that are intended within the scope of the overall project include the introduction of low-voltage pathway lighting for added security and similarly related lighting of select landscape areas for aesthetic complement. Additionally, minor modifications are proposed to add segments of new decomposed granite pathways that create connections and the option for street intersection crossing where they do not currently exist. This feature is being added for purposes of additional pedestrian safety. New pathway additions will have minor cosmetic treatments applied that will help identify and distinguish them from the historic path.

In an effort to get this potentially multi-year project initiated, staff and Mr. Gordon are looking for Council concurrence to proceed with first-phase development. Mr. Gordon directed Mia Lehrer to develop construction documents for the reconstruction of the lily pond and the restoration of the Electric Fountain located at the intersection of Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevards. Ms. Lehrer will be presenting renderings and other information to help City Council visually understand what the completed project would look like, inclusive of minor modifications that will be incorporated. If City Council gives direction to proceed, staff will facilitate the bid process and anticipate returning to City Council on July 16, 2013 with a request for award of bid. To help assure project completion prior to centennial year programs and activities, first phase development will only address restoration of the lily pond and surrounding block.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

In addition to funds that are being privately raised by Mr. Gordon, City Council set aside \$750,000 of City funds from Fiscal Year 2011/12 year-end surplus to serve on a matching basis as its commitment to support the intent and completion of the project. Mia Lehrer will be discussing cost estimates associated with the restoration of the lily pond and staff will report on the sum of funds that have been received to date and are on deposit within a separate account of the Community Charitable Foundation.

In addition to the funds already received, Mr. Gordon has numerous pledges that he is in the process of finalizing. This process will continue while the project proceeds with its bid phase. It is anticipated that all needed funds will be received and on deposit by the time the project is brought back before City Council for award. If additional time is needed to finalize the collection of pledges, staff will delay bringing the matter back

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before Council until such time that all required funds have been received. The City's traditional bidding process requires contractors to hold their pricing for 90 days which, staff feels, will be more than ample time to finalize finances, if needed, and should not delay the bidding process from occurring.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that City Council approve the construction plans and documents developed by Mia Lehrer and Associates for reconstruction of the lily pond and related site improvements associated with the planned phase one development. Staff further recommends that City Council also adopts the CEQA Categorical Exemption and allow staff to facilitative the bid process. Staff will bring the project back before City Council for award of bid at such time that sufficient funds are on deposit and allocated for the project. At present, that date is anticipated to be July 16, 2013. Based on that date, staff anticipates the project to be completed by January 2014 and in time for the upcoming centennial celebrations.

Steven Zoet  
Approved By

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# **Attachment 1**



www.beverlyhills.org

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
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Beverly Hills, CA 90210-4817  
(310) 285-1124  
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### CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS

#### Categorical Exemption

NAME OF PROJECT Beverly Gardens Park Project

LOCATION 22 blocks along North Santa Monica Boulevard, Beverly Hills, California, 90210

TYPE OF BUSINESS (IF COMMERCIAL) City Public Park

PROJECT DESCRIPTION Historic Landscape Restoration of Beverly Gardens Park

APPLICANT'S NAME City of Beverly Hills (Director of Community Services Steven Zoet)

PHONE 310-285-2533

APPLICANT'S ADDRESS Recreation and Parks Administration 455 N. Crescent Drive

CITY Beverly Hills, CA ZIP 90210

The undersigned, having received this project for processing, has reviewed it for environmental impact and concluded that the project qualifies for a categorical exemption under the procedures adopted by the City of Beverly Hills and no further environmental assessment is necessary.

**Applicable Exemption Class Class 31 (Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation)**

COMMENTS The proposed project involves the repair, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation and reconstruction of the historic Park in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings. This includes rehabilitating and restoring landscaping including trees; repairing and restoring hardscape including paths and curbs; repairing, restoring and reconstructing fountains; repairing, restoring and reconstructing a lily pond; and, repairing and restoring small structures such as pergolas. In addition, an existing restroom structure will be renovated and slightly expanded (less than 2,500 square foot addition) consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The restroom renovation is also exempt under Class 1 (e) as a small addition to an existing structure.

REVIEWED BY *Michelle Melnady* Date May 6, 2013

# **Attachment 2**



## **CEQA Compliance Review for the Beverly Gardens Park Restoration Project.**

Landscape Plans and other documents prepared by Mia Lehrer and Associates for the Historic Landscape Restoration of Beverly Gardens Park have been reviewed for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as well as the Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes as prepared by the Secretary of the Interior. The CEQA review was informed in this case by the Historic Resources Technical Report – Beverly Gardens Park Historic Assessment Report prepared by the City's Historic Consultant, Ostashay & Associates.

### **Conclusion**

The final Landscape Plans and other documents prepared by Mia Lehrer and Associates for the Historic Landscape Restoration of Beverly Gardens Park have been found to be in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as well as the Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes as prepared by the Secretary of the Interior. In particular the project represents a faithful restoration of the character defining features of this linear historic landscape including: Lily Pond Garden and Monument Sign; Kusama Tulips Garden; Hunter and Hounds Garden; Doheny Fountain Garden; Cactus Garden; and Electric Fountain Garden.

Where new construction has been incorporated into the design, such as a modest expansion of the existing restroom structure, the newly configured paths at mid blocks, new hardscape at mid-block crossings, new pathway edging and new low level lighting along paths and low level uplighting for certain trees, the proposed new work is found to be consistent with the Standards. In each case, new work has been physically differentiated from the existing/original historic features, but is compatible in design, color, size, scale, type, texture, and appearance to the historic landscape elements.

In conclusion, the proposed project does not constitute a significant impact to the historic resource in that the project is found to be in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as well as the Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes as prepared by the Secretary of the Interior. Given no other environmental impacts this project qualifies for a Class 31 exemption under CEQA.

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William R. Crouch AIA, AICP, NCARB, LEED AP

Urban Designer

City of Beverly Hills

# **Attachment 3**





## RESTORATION FOCUS

- Restore Lily Pond
- Restore Circular Fountain
- Retain Photo Opportunity Area
- New Planting At Water Features
- Bollard Lighting at Pathways
- Accent Uplights at Specimen Trees



## RESTORATION FOCUS

- Restore Electric Fountain
- Improve Donor Wall
- Hedge Screening at Residential Edge
- Modify Pedestrian Path for Safe Crossing
- Bollard Lighting at Pathway
- Accent Uplights at Corner Planting

