



STAFF REPORT
CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS

**For the Architectural Commission
Meeting of September 21, 2011**

TO: Architectural Commission

FROM: Shena Rojemann, Associate Planner

SUBJECT: 153 SOUTH BEDFORD DRIVE
153 South Bedford Drive
Request for approval of a façade remodel of a multi-family property
(PL112 3040)

PROJECT INFORMATION

Applicant	Raffi Cohen
Address	153 South Bedford Drive
Project Name	153 South Bedford Drive
Project Type	Façade remodel

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project is located on the west side of the 200 block of South Bedford Drive, between Charleville Blvd and Wilshire Blvd. The applicant is requesting approval of a façade remodel of the existing multi-family property. The following elements are proposed:

Façade:

- Cable railing systems;
- Terra Green Texstone stucco;
- Marmoriano TexStone stucco;
- Aluminum doors and windows;
- Glass garage doors and entry doors.

A material board will be presented at the meeting.

Historical Analysis

Prior to submitting this project for architectural review the project was identified as being listed on the City's 2004 Historic Resources Survey Report as a potential contributor to the locally eligible historic district, the Tract 7710 MFR District. As such, before alterations could be made to the property, a historical analysis was required. Thus, the project was reviewed by the City's historical consultant, Ostashay & Associates Consulting. The conclusion of the review (attached in Exhibit A) was that the property is considered to be a semi-altered contributor to the district because of its architectural qualities, date of construction and general characteristics. Since it's a moderate representation of the property type and style that identify the district, alterations, if done in terms of compatible design, materials, size, scale and texture

would not adversely affect the historic significance and architectural qualities that define the Tract 7710 MFR District. Taking into the recommendations from the historical analysis, the applicant has designed the project to be within the scope of permissible alterations. Prior to being presented to the Commission for review, the alterations proposed were peer reviewed by Ostashay & Associates Consulting and have been found to be in keeping with the scope of alterations permitted by the Secretary of the Interior Standards for rehabilitation.

ANALYSIS

The proposed facade remodel is intended to update the appearance of the existing building and add architectural details of the building. The proposed facade remodel proposes high quality materials. The use of high quality materials and modern style shall be cohesive with, and sometimes superior to, the facades found along South Bedford Drive. The proposed design offers a revitalized appearance with a clean finish and is consistent in quality with the other projects in the area.

ARCHITECTURAL CRITERIA

Pursuant to Municipal Code Section 3-3010 the Architectural Commission may approve, approve with conditions, or disapprove the issuance of a building permit in any matter subject to its jurisdiction after consideration of the following criteria:

(a) The plan for the proposed building or structure is in conformity with good taste and good design and in general contributes to the image of Beverly Hills as a place of beauty, spaciousness, balance, taste, fitness, broad vistas and high quality.

The proposed facade remodel creates a dynamic facade. The materials proposed are of a high quality. The design appears in keeping with (and in some cases superior to) the quality of multi-family properties. The proposed facade remodel appears to be in conformity with good taste and good design and in general contributes to the image of Beverly Hills as a place of beauty, spaciousness, balance, taste, fitness, broad vistas and high quality.

(b) The plan for the proposed building or structure indicates the manner in which the structure is reasonably protected against external and internal noise, vibrations, and other factors which may tend to make the environment less desirable.

The proposed facade remodel does not appear to modify any existing barriers to external or internal noise and is not anticipated to make the environment less favorable.

(c) The proposed building is not in its exterior design and appearance of inferior quality such as to cause the nature of the local environment to materially depreciate in appearance and value.

The materials proposed for the facade remodel does not appear to be inferior in quality or execution and would therefore not degrade the local environment in appearance or value.

(d) The proposed building or structure is in harmony with the proposed developments on land in the General area, with the General Plan for Beverly Hills, and with any precise plans adopted pursuant to the General Plan.

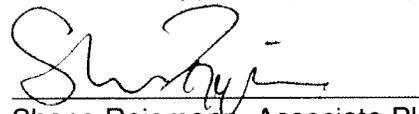
The proposed facade remodel is in conformity with the prevailing uses in the general area and with other similar projects approved by the Commission. Furthermore, the overall composition and design of the façade would be in harmony with proposed or future uses in the area as would be allowed in compliance with the current General Plan for Beverly Hills, and with any precise plans adopted pursuant to the General Plan.

(e) The proposed building or structure is in conformity with the standards of this Code and other applicable laws insofar as the location and appearance of the buildings and structures are involved.

Subject to review of the final construction documents, the proposed façade remodel and new signage are in conformity with the standards of the Beverly Hills Municipal Code and other applicable laws insofar as the location and appearance of the buildings and structures involved.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the foregoing analysis and pending the information and conclusions that may result from testimony received at the public hearing, as well as Architectural Commission deliberations, staff recommends the Architectural Commission either provide the applicant with further direction and return the item for restudy, or approve the project with any conditions the Commission may wish to add, in addition to the standard conditions of approval (attached).


Shena Rojemann, Associate Planner

Attachments

Exhibit A – Historical Report from Ostashay & Associates Consulting
Exhibit B – Standard Conditions of Approval

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EXHIBIT A
Historical Analysis from
Ostashay & Associates Consulting

Memorandum

To: Shena Rojemann, City of Beverly Hills

Date: 08/19/2011

From: Jan Ostashay, Principal OAC

Re: SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS COMPLIANCE REVIEW:
153 South Bedford Drive, Beverly Hills, California

Overview

At the request of the City of Beverly Hills Community Development Department, Planning Division, Ostashay & Associates assessed the property referenced above for historical significance and considered potential implications to the property in connection with the proposed remodeling of the structure by the project applicant. No project plans have been provided for compliance review at this time, but the primary work scope includes the remodeling of the exterior elevations to reflect a more contemporary, modern appearance. The following information is submitted to you for your reference and use. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Historical Assessment

I have conducted a cursory site visit of the property, reviewed relevant permit history on the property, and have conducted additional research on the property and the immediate surrounding area to support the following historical assessment.

Historical Background

The subject building, situated on a 127 foot by 63 foot (approximate) parcel, is a two-story, six unit apartment building built in 1938. Located at the northwest corner of South Bedford Drive and Charleville Boulevard, the main multi-family complex is comprised of a two-story, U-shape structure with six units. Adjacent the alley to the west is a separate two-story, I-shape structure that was also built in 1938 with a garage at ground level and an apartment above. Reflective of the Minimal Traditional style, the buildings were designed by architect William George Lutzi for then owners Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Weller.

The east elevation of the building is considered the primary (front) elevation because of the architectural detailing along this side of the property. The other elevations are secondary in importance since they lack the finer details and have been modified in some areas. Capped with a complex hip roof, the Minimal Traditional stylistic design elements of the structure include a symmetrical façade; stucco sided exterior walls surfaces (though non-original); quoining details at the corners; 6/6 multi-pane sash wood frame windows with louvered shutters and wood sills; large, multi-pane bay windows; classically inspired front entry molding and canopy (along Bedford Drive); multi-panel wood entry doors; brick walkways, steps and landing areas; small arched shape dormer vents; a narrow beltcourse; and a decorative octagonal focal window also on the Bedford side. Landscaping includes a small grassy lawn and modest plantings within the courtyard area and immediately surrounding the building along Bedford Drive and Charleville Boulevard.

Historical Significance

When evaluating the property's historical significance, its association with important historical events or persons and/or its merits in architecture must be considered within its historic context. Historic contexts are written narratives of those patterns or trends in history by which a specific occurrence, property, or site is understood and its meaning (and ultimately its significance) within history is made clear. The following paragraphs provide historical context for the subject property in order to evaluate its significance and potential landmark eligibility. For the purposes of this current survey work the property is being evaluated for individual historical significance and re-evaluated as a previously identified contributor to a potential locally eligible historic district.

The subject property was previously identified and evaluated in 2004, as part of the on-going City survey process (Historic Resources Survey Report, June 2004 by PCR Services). At that time, the survey considered the property a contributor to a potential locally significant historic district called the Tract 7710 Multi-Family Residence (MFR) District. As stated in the 2004 survey report the "Tract 7710 MFR District possesses a significant concentration of middle-class, multi-family dwellings that are reflective of period revival style residential development in Beverly Hills in the period between the two World Wars." At the time of the survey, the district contributors, of which there were 114 identified, exhibited a moderate to high level of physical integrity. This district is located south of Wilshire Boulevard and north of Olympic Boulevard, east of Moreno Drive and west of South Rodeo Drive.

The Tract 7710 MFR District contains primarily two-story duplexes, four-plexes, and six and eight-unit apartment buildings designed in a variety of period revival architectural styles including French Eclectic, Spanish Colonial Revival, Monterrey Revival, Colonial Revival, and English or Tudor Revival. Vernacular modern style buildings with varying levels of applied revival style decorative elements are also represented in the district. Being built in 1938 in the Minimal Traditional style, the subject property was identified as a contributor to this district in the 2004 survey.

Nonetheless, in assessing the property's individual historical significance, no evidence was uncovered to associate this site with any historical events that have made a significant contribution to the development of the City, State, or the nation. While the property is a good example of a multi-family residence it is only one of several hundreds of such property types located within the City that reflects the overall residential development and growth of the town. As such, it does not adequately manifest those qualities that distinguish it as an important property directly associated with any events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the City's history.

In addition, the property does not appear to be identified with any historic personages significant in our past. The property was built for Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Weller. In conducting the research on this property, no information was uncovered to connote the Weller's as personages of note or important in the community's historical past. As for the individuals who occupied the units of the Bedford Drive apartment over the years, current research did not reveal any evidence to indicate their historical significance or notability, particularly in association with the subject property. The majority of the tenants appear to have held a variety of middle class, white collar or blue collar positions; others were retired or widowed.

Considering the property for architectural merit, it is a modest example of a Minimal Traditional style multi-family residence. The Minimal Traditional style began in the United States during the mid-1930s and lasted until the early 1950s. In Beverly Hills, and in particular within the Tract 7710 area, this style emerged in the 1930s and was utilized well into the late 1940s. The Minimal Traditional style was a response to the economic Depression of the 1930s, conceived and developed by agencies and associations including the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and the National Association of Real-estate Boards, and by manufacturers and modern community builders who promoted and financed the construction of efficient, mass-produced and affordable housing. The style is loosely based on the Tudor Revival and Eclectic revival styles of the 1920s and 1930s, but with much less ornamentation and decorative detailing.

The subject property reflects the common elements that identify it with the Minimal Traditional idiom; however, there are better representative extant examples in the immediate area that possess those key character-defining features of the style, including 137 South Camden Drive (1936), 149 South Peck Drive (1940), 145 South Peck Drive (1940), 141 South Bedford Drive (1937), 133 South Bedford Drive (1936), 132 South Roxbury Drive (1936), 136 South Roxbury Drive (1941), and 148 South McCarty Drive (1947). In evaluating the 153 South Bedford Drive property's individual architectural significance, it does not appear to embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction to adequately satisfy this criterion.

The architect of record, William George Lutzi (1902-1994), studied under architect Clarence Small in the 1920s and Paul Williams in the early 1930s until he received his architectural license in 1938. For a few years he had his own practice and had a number of modest commissions, including the 153 South Bedford Drive project. He partnered with Russian born architect William Allen in late 1938 to form the architectural firm of Allen and Lutzi. Together they designed some prominent southland buildings including the City of Burbank City Hall (1941); City of South Gate City Hall, Municipal Auditorium, and Civic Center (1946); and Lynwood's Municipal Auditorium (1945). In considering Lutzi as a master architect his portfolio of work does not support such acknowledgment. In reviewing other examples of his solo work and any peer accolades received, of which there weren't any, it appears that Lutzi's individual work does not rise to a level in which to consider him a figure of generally recognized greatness in the field of architecture.

The property's current assessment of historical integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association appears moderate despite the application of thick textured stucco over the original smooth finish stucco and what appears to be the infill of two window openings along the Charleville Boulevard (south) elevation (that portion of the building adjacent the separate garage/apartment unit to the west. The heavily applied stucco has changed the texture and "read" of many of the quoining elements at the corners of the building. Nonetheless, the primary elevation, along South Bedford, has not been radically compromised and still retains much of the original architectural features that associate the building with the Minimal Traditional style.

Lastly, in consideration of the property as a contributor to a locally eligible historic district the complex still retains sufficient qualities of design and association to merit such recognition. However, out of the original district pool of 114 contributors, it is one of the more undistinguishable properties of the grouping. Lacking any true architectural merit, it is really the property's size, scale and proportion, massing, and date of construction that help convey its sense of time and place, as well as unite it visually and historically with the other contributors in the district. The property may be referred to as a semi-altered-contributor.

Work Proposed

Under the proposed project the existing multi-family residence would be remodeled into a contemporary looking multi-family apartment building. New landscaping would also be incorporated throughout the site. No additional floor space (square footage) would be added as part of the scope of work. Key remodeling aspects include the removal of all existing exterior features such as wall surface materials, window frames and glazing, doors, light fixtures, and staircases. The existing materials, features, finishes, and design elements on the exterior of the property that convey the Minimal Traditional style would be removed for the remodeling and upgrading of the site. The basic building envelope,

Consistent with the CEQA Guidelines, any maintenance, repair, stabilization, preservation, restoration, reconstruction, conservation, and/or rehabilitation work proposed within the district should be conducted 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* (herein referred to as the SOI Standards) or the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* (herein referred to as the SOI

Standards for Rehabilitation) by Weeks and Grimmer. In addition, this work should be guided by the treatment recommendations outlined in the National Park Service (NPS) "Preservation Brief" series and "Interpreting the Standards" (ITS) technical bulletins, as well as the State Historical Building Code (SHBC).

Analysis of Proposed Work

As mentioned, the subject property, while ineligible for federal, state, or local landmark designation, is considered a semi-altered contributor to the locally eligible historic district, the Tract 7710 MFR District. The definition of what constitutes a historic resource under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is open to some interpretation when addressing district contributors. Pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a), individual properties, including historic districts, listed on or eligible for listing on a federal, state, or local register or inventory are historic resources, and their demolition or significant alteration could require preparation of an environmental impact report. However, it is less clear what would occur when a contributing building to a historic district is adversely impacted. Since the district is the historic resource impacts such as demolition or extensive alterations must be considered from an integrity perspective. Many city attorneys from various jurisdictions have, in the past, opined that a contributor to a district would likely not qualify as a historic resource under CEQA. However, if demolition or significant alterations of a contributor would reduce the percentage of contributing structures to less than 50% (the standard minimum threshold for a district) a significant impact could occur to the district. Per the 2004 Historic Resources Survey Report, there are 114 contributors in the Tract 7710 MFR District.

In order for a substantial adverse change to occur to the Tract 7710 MFR District its historic character of setting and majority of contributing structures would need to be removed or substantially physically altered. Under the proposed project, the subject building will be significantly altered. Its basic footprint, envelope, massing, height, and form will be retained. As previously stated, the property is considered a semi-altered contributor to the above referenced district because of its architectural qualities, date of construction, and general characteristics of a multi-family residential property type. However, since it is a moderate representation of such a property type and style, it is considered a minor element to the overall historic district. Its alteration, if done in terms of compatible design, materials, size, scale, and texture would not adversely affect the historic significance and architectural qualities that define the Tract 7710 MFR District.

Conclusion

The goal of a rehabilitation project, for which this is considered, is to respectfully add to or alter a historic property in order to maintain its historic character and continue its original use or meet new use requirements. Under the treatment for rehabilitation some exterior alterations to a historic property are generally needed to assure its continued use. However, it is most important that such alterations do not radically change, obscure, or destroy important character-defining materials, features, or finishes that identify and define the historic property. Such impacts may be considered direct (physical) and/or indirect (visual or audible). Alteration may also include the selective removal of buildings or other features of the environment that are intrusive and therefore detract from the overall historic character of the district.

Exterior modifications may seem essential for the continued use of a building, but it is emphasized in the SOI Standards that radical modifications should be avoided, if possible, and considered only after it is determined that the new needs cannot be met by altering secondary, non-character-defining elements. When dealing with historic districts, the SOI Standards for Rehabilitation recommends that the new work should be compatible with the historic character of the district's setting in terms of size, scale, design, material, color, and texture. Any retention and reuse of historic fabric is highly recommended.

Per the NPS, a project involving substantial or controversial modifications to a historic resource is considered acceptable if it:

- Preserves significant historic materials and features; and
- Preserves the historic character; and
- Protects the historical significance by making a visual, yet compatible, distinction between the old and new.

It is highly recommended that the design plans for the proposed project be submitted and reviewed by City staff for compatibility with the historic district prior to approval of such plans and the issuance of building permits. If the SOI Standards are utilized in the design of the new project, the alteration of the subject property would not affect the historic and architectural significance of the Tract 7710 MFR District as a whole. Therefore, its loss would not cause a substantial adverse change in the environment.

ATTACHMENT A:

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

The ten standards for rehabilitation are as follows:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive material or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will 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 elements from other properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive historic feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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.

EXHIBIT B
Standard Conditions of Approval

1. Final plans shall substantially conform to the plans submitted to and reviewed by the Architectural Commission on September 21, 2011.
2. This approval by the Architectural Commission is for design only; the project is subject to all applicable City regulations for the construction of the project (including zoning, building codes and Public Works requirements.)
3. Any future modifications to this approval shall be presented to staff for a determination as to whether the change may be approved by staff (minor) or requires review by the Commission. Changes made without City approval shall be required to be restored to match the City approved plans.
4. Any projections within the public-right-of way shall be reviewed and approved by the Public Works and Transportation Department.
5. A copy of the City's approval letter shall be scanned onto the final plans.