



P.O. Box 4173 Glendale CA 91202
www.GlendaleHistorical.org

November 18, 2016

Mr. Philip Lanzafame
Director of Community Development
City of Glendale
633 East Broadway
Glendale, CA 91206

RE: Mitigated Negative Declaration for PDR 1329554, 510 - 512 West Doran Street

Dear Mr. Lanzafame:

The Glendale Historical Society is grateful for the opportunity to comment on the draft Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared for the proposed project at 510 – 512 W. Doran. Our non-profit organization has more than 650 members and works to preserve and celebrate Glendale’s rich history and remaining architectural heritage.

When TGHS first learned of a proposed project at 512 W. Doran a few years ago, we supported the idea of relocating the historic resource—a 1910 Transitional Craftsman—on the property to allow for development. We continue to do so. As you know, however, we object to the demolition of one-third of the building to accomplish this as well as to the size, scale, and proximity of the proposed new construction.

We appreciate that the City has agreed that a categorical exemption from CEQA review cannot be used for the proposed project, and we have read the proposed MND with care. We believe that a focused EIR is required before the project as proposed can move forward for the following reasons: the proposed MND does not require fully enforceable mitigation measures in compliance with CEQA, and it inappropriately relies on an economic feasibility argument in analyzing the project against the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. We further note that the fair argument standard applies when a city has determined a resource is historic and it is trying to determine whether the project would have a significant impact. An expert has found that the project would have a significant adverse impact on a historic resource even as mitigated and thus an EIR should be prepared.

Attached please find an intensive evaluation of the subject property that concurs with staff’s finding that 512 W. Doran is a historic resource under CEQA; we likewise agree

The Glendale Historical Society (TGHS) advocates for the preservation of important Glendale landmarks, supports maintaining the historic character of Glendale’s neighborhoods, educates the public about and engages the community in celebrating and preserving Glendale’s history and architectural heritage, and operates the Doctors House Museum. TGHS is a tax-exempt, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, and donations to TGHS are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

with staff that the assessment prepared by Kaplan Chen Kaplan (KCK) is inadequate. The KCK assessment misidentifies the subject property as an American Foursquare (while simultaneously ignoring the likely eligibility on this ground given the rarity in Glendale of this style, one of the most popular house types in the U.S. at the turn of the century [draft "South Glendale Historic Context Statement," September 30, 2016, p. 49]). As a result the KCK assessment does not compare the subject property to similar properties surveyed in the 2006-2007 Craftsman Survey, which did not include 512 W. Doran for unknown reasons. The subject property is a high-integrity Transitional Craftsman; the Survey identified six high-integrity Transitional Craftsman houses within the survey population and all were found eligible for designation on the Glendale Register, a tribute to the rarity of this Craftsman sub-type in Glendale (Craftsman Survey, p. 34). The subject property would almost certainly have been found eligible for the Glendale Register had it been included in the survey.

The KCK assessment downplays the extent and significance of character-defining features—for example, the extraordinary series of eight Corinthian columns that support a full-width front porch with partial, projecting, wrap-around porch; the steeply-pitched, asymmetric, bellcast hipped roof; the single light front door with dentils at the sill and a recessed panel, flanked by decorative, partial height, leaded-glass sidelights with *fleur de lis* and quatrefoil motifs. Character-defining features at the sides and rear include three-part bay windows on both sides, a three-part set of one-over-one windows along the west side, and double doors and continuous transom opening at the rear of the property. Our analysis in the attached DPR 523 form shows that the property is eligible for the Glendale Register under Criteria 3 and 5 and for the California Register under Criterion 3.

We have already laid out in detail why we believe the proposed project does not comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation in our letters of June 22, and July 13, 2016. We will not reiterate them here but only note that the analysis of the proposed project in relation to the Standards has not materially changed in the MND. There have been tweaks to the project, including the possible reuse of a character-defining, west-facing three-part window at the rear (window 8), which would potentially replace a double-door. We continue to believe, however, that a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource would result from the implementation of the project as currently proposed. We observe once again that it is inappropriate to use *National Register Bulletin 15* to justify demolition of one-third of the original structure's materials and workmanship and the reconfiguration of what is left; its guidance is designed to assist in the evaluation of properties *found in an already altered condition*. And the size, scale, and proximity of the new construction will likewise have an irreversible impact on the setting and spatial relationships that characterize the property, which the staff Memorandum of July 14, 2016 conceded "will be completely altered by the project."

The MND raises some new issues. We are concerned that the MND improperly defers mitigation. It requires post-approval preparation of a moving plan but provides no reason why that plan could not have been previously prepared for review. Mitigation measures must be specific regarding future actions to be accomplished if they are designed to reduce impacts. The mitigation measures must establish performance standards to be met and specify methods in order to comply with requirements in CEQA.

In addition, the project relies on mitigation measures to eliminate potential impacts, but these mitigation measures are not fully enforceable as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(a)(2). When the MND states that the retention and reuse of the wood siding from the rear façade, the retention and repair of all existing windows, and the reuse of the three-part window at the rear façade elsewhere on the building will occur “to the greatest extent possible,” it is conceding that such mitigation may not in fact take place. Mitigation measures are not merely expressions of hope. Widespread use of the term “to the greatest extent possible” triggers a finding by the City that could only be made after preparation and review of an EIR. If the described mitigation is not “possible,” then the project would result in a significant adverse impact. Mitigation measures for a significant adverse impact can only be rejected if the City makes findings, supported by substantial evidence, that the measure is economically infeasible and prepares a statement of overriding considerations.

Furthermore, although the National Park Service indicates that the Standards should take economic feasibility into consideration, CEQA takes precedence. Under CEQA, the economic feasibility of measures to reduce a project’s significant impacts can only be a factor in considering whether or not to include the measures as mitigation after the preparation of an EIR and the presentation of actual substantial evidence that would support findings of economic infeasibility. And even then, under CEQA, “the fact that an alternative may be more expensive or less profitable *is not sufficient to show that the alternative is financially infeasible. What is required is evidence that the additional costs or lost profitability are sufficiently severe as to render it impractical to proceed with the project*” (emphasis added, *Preservation Action Council v. City of San Jose* 141 Cal.App.4th 1336).

We assert that the proposed mitigation measures would not reduce project-related impacts to an insignificant level, and for the reasons we have laid out in our previous letters, as well as those raised here—that mitigation measures are not fully enforceable as required under CEQA and thus may not prevent significant adverse impacts, and that economic feasibility cannot be considered in decisions regarding mitigation measures in an MND—we request that the City prepare a focused EIR for the proposed project. We note, finally, that because the City is trying to determine whether the project would have a significant adverse impact on a building it has found to be a historic resource, the fair argument standard applies. Francesca Smith, a qualified architectural historian with thirty years experience who meets and exceeds the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards in history and architectural history, finds that the demolition of one-third of the identified historic resource and relocating and crowding it with much larger new buildings would have a significant adverse impact.

RE: 510-512 W. Doran

Page 4

Therefore a focused EIR should be prepared to fully analyze alternatives to the proposed project as well as the impacts of the project on a historic resource.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Greg Grammer

Greg Grammer
President, The Glendale Historical Society

Cc: Mr. Jay Platt, Senior Urban Designer, City of Glendale
Ms. Vista Ezzati, Planning Assistant, City of Glendale